

The SPORTS PINK

55p

Supporting **LOCAL** sport **Daily Echo**

BRENDAN RODGERS IS THE BENCHMARK FOR YOUNG MANAGERS – RITCHIE

SEE PAGE 17



dailyecho.co.uk/sport



Ex-keeper reckons Nigel Adkins is the man to keep Saints in the top flight

Page 2

ALL EYES ON ST MARY'S FINAL!

EASTLEIGH and AFC Totton will be the FA's guinea pigs with regards to goal-line technology at St Mary's next week.

The two clubs face each other at Saints' home ground in the final of the Hampshire Senior Cup next Wednesday, writes **SIMON CARTER**.

The game has been given extra spice as Hampshire firm Hawk-Eye will trial their technology in a competitive environment for the first time.

Goal-line technology is likely to be given the thumbs up in July and will be of benefit to referees across the world, according to the Football Association's Neale Barry.

The former Premier League referee is part of the International Football Association Board sub-committee charged with deciding whether current systems are ready to be implemented in the sport.

Hawk-Eye and German-Danish firm GoalRef are vying to be approved as

CONT ON PAGE 4



Football's incredible rise – Pages 6 & 7

CRICKET



Hants new boy aims to fulfil potential

See pages 24-27

TERRY PAINE



Saints legend writes for *The Pink*

See page 5

YACHTING



Alex aims for round-the-world first

See pages 30-31



HAMPSHIRE SENIOR CUP FINAL

EASTLEIGH FC V AFC TOTTON

AT ST MARY'S ON WED 16TH MAY

KICK OFF 7.30pm.

ADULTS £10.00 JUNIOR'S £5.00.

**EARLY BIRD SEASON
TICKET OFFER**

**Purchase before 31st July
£99 Adults**

£69 Students & Senior Citizens

£35 Under 16's

Under 7's go free

Contact Shauna Taylor or Mark Jewell on 02380 613361



Mancini keeps City all together

SIR Alex Ferguson has claimed Manchester City "might have fallen apart" this season had it not been for the fact they had the Barclays Premier League title in sight.

Both Manchester clubs head into the final game knowing they could end up as champions.

However, City have the clear edge thanks to their goal difference advantage, which means if they beat QPR at the Etihad Stadium it would secure them their first title since 1968.

It represents a major achievement for manager Roberto Mancini, who has had to deal with numerous issues, including Carlos Tevez's lengthy absence from the club and Mario Balotelli's erratic behaviour.

"It is obvious all the things he has had to deal with," said Ferguson. "If he didn't have the closeness to win the league, it might have fallen apart."

Instead, City look set to be crowned champions, setting United a challenge Ferguson likens to the one Jose Mourinho laid down following his arrival at Chelsea in 2004.

"We had to contend with Jose's management style, which was very



FERGUSON MANCINI

effective," said Ferguson.

"He did a fantastic job there.

"You knew you were competing against a very clever manager. You weren't just facing the money, you were facing a very united squad.

"They were hard to beat. City - quality-wise - are very similar to Chelsea at that time.

"Some of their players have had outstanding seasons. When you win the league you need five or six players who are consistently good all the time.

"City have had that this year and the manager, for most of the part, has done well."

However, even if City do not make the "stupid" mistake Ferguson says it requires for his team to land a 20th crown, he will not back down from the challenge.

"We have to do something about it," he said. "That is the only thing we can do."

"We have to meet challenges and the good thing is that we tend to get there in the end.

"In the situation we are in at the moment, it looks as though we are going to lose out this season.

"But there are a lot of young players in the squad. We don't look, in any way, as though it is the end of a period for us.

"In many ways it is the start for a lot of young players here. The challenge is very obvious to them now if we lose the league.

"As we did when Chelsea won the league two years in a row, we have to do something about it. We managed to do that.

"Hopefully we can do it again."

Saints Spotlight

EX-KEEPER: SAINTS ARE IN SAFE HANDS WITH NIGEL



NEIL Moss believes Saints are "in good hands" and insists everything is in place for his former employers to become Premier League regulars once again.

Moss, 36, spent eight years with the Saints before leaving in 2003 to join his beloved AFC Bournemouth, where he was forced to retire five years later due to a wrist injury, *writes TOM CROCKETT*.

Now a goalkeeping coach at Dean Court, Moss spoke of his delight at Saints returning to the top flight.

He said: "I watched the highlights of the game [v Coventry] and I'm really pleased for them."

"They are a Premier League side with a Premier League set-up and a fantastic academy all the way through, so the final bit for them was to get promoted back to the Premier League.

"I'm pretty sure with the set-up they've got, the fans, the stadium and all the rest of it, they will make a good fist of it next year and hopefully re-establish themselves as a decent Premier League side.

"I'm obviously pleased as an ex-Southampton player that they're back in the Premier League and

also it's good for the south coast as well."

Moss made 25 appearances during his spell at Saints, at a time when top flight football was the norm.

And after seven long years away, he feels they are now back where they belong.

"There are a few big clubs who would probably say they should be in the Premier League, such as Sheffield Wednesday, United, Leeds, but Southampton have done ever so well," he continued.

"Back-to-back promotions is a tough ask and I think the

Championship, rightly so, is labelled the toughest league to get out of with what is at stake.

"Many clubs have thrown a lot of money at their sides in an attempt to return to the promise land, only to end up in financial difficulty and dropping down the leagues."

The likes of Bradford, Swindon and Barnsley have all had stints in the Premier League since it was formed in 1992 but none have managed to get back in

once they got relegated, plying their trade in the third of fourth tier over recent campaigns.

Saints are no strangers to darker financial times but Moss feels the way the club has been handled off the pitch is key to their double promotion.

He said: "It's a fine balancing act for the chairman and all the people behind the



NEIL MOSS

scenes because you can go for broke and leave your club in tatters, and we have seen a lot of ex-Premier League and Championship clubs struggling for money, but Saints have managed it just about right.

"They have pumped a lot of money into their academy.

"I know that they're going to be one of the best academies in the country, so they're doing everything right."

Swansea and Norwich have shown this season that it is possible to compete well in the Premier League after just being promoted.

And Moss thinks that, with a few tweaks to the squad, Saints can follow suit next season, especially with the current man in charge.

"They are going to have to strengthen," he said.

"Any club that goes up will have to maybe add one or two and also make tough choices about ones who they think maybe can't cut it in the Premier League.

"But Nigel Adkins has done a fantastic job.

"Two seasons and two promotions, you can't ask for more than that!

"The club is in good hands with him and with the people that run it behind the scenes."

NON LEAGUE FOOTBALL STARTS ON PAGE 14

Saints Spotlight

WHO'S GOOD ENOUGH?

AFTER all the fantastic scenes at St Mary's, it is now time to sit down and seriously look at what we may need, and who is not going to be up to it, in the Premiership.

We need five or six new players if we are to stay in the top flight, and not go straight back down.

Players we have now, and what I think about them.

Kelvin Davis: Has had a great season, and still think he has another year at the top level. BUT, we need to get in another keeper, as Bialkowski is not the answer since his injury a few years ago. I don't think he is good enough for the Premiership.

Frazer Richardson: Good at going forward, but not a good defender, and we will need someone that can defend. I would keep him, but look at getting another full back in.

Danny Butterfield: Good player, but age has to go against him. If we get another right back, then Danny should be let go.

Dan Harding: Honest player but not good enough for Premiership. I would let him go.

Danny Fox: Good at going forward, plenty of energy, but cannot defend that well. We need another left back, so we can have Danny as back up.

Jose Fonte: Good player, but has struggled ever since he had his hair cut! I would look to get in another centre half, but certainly keep him.

Jos Hooiveld: Super signing. Has the class to play at the top tier.

Aaron Martin: Young lad, who will only get better as he plays, so may need to send him out on loan.

Radhi Jaidi: Good player for Saints, but with age and injuries against him we must let him go.

Dan Seaborne: Not good enough for Premier League. Let him go.

Ryan Dickson: Not good enough. Let him go.

Morgan Schneiderlin: May come of age in the Premier, as he may get a little more time on the ball.

He MUST look at getting into the box more, and be more of a threat to defences, as he has a very poor scoring record. Not great a great ball winner, but good passer of the ball. A good player to keep.

Jack Cork: Good player on the ball, he also needs to try and convert his chances into goals. Looks a better option in midfield, than some, as he has energy, and good brain. Good player to keep.

Dean Hammond: Not up to Premier standard, he and Schneiderlin both play too deep. He does not score enough from central midfield. I would let him go.

Richard Chaplow: Honest enough player, gives his all, but certainly NOT a right sided midfielder. He is the only one that can tackle, but I am afraid I don't see him as a Premier League player. Let him go.

Adam Lallana: Will only get better. Will have NO problem adjusting to top flight. Superb player, wide or narrow in midfield, PLUS scores goals.

Jason Puncheon: I like Jason BUT why has he been in and out of the



LET HIM GO: Saints fan Geoff Smith would sell midfielder Richard Chaplow, left.



LET HIM GO: Defender Dan Harding



LET HIM GO: Striker Lee Barnard



LET HIM GO: Defender Dan Seaborne



LET HIM GO: Striker David Connolly.

Daily Echo reporter Adam Leitch this week gave his verdict on Nigel Adkins' Saints squad and which players he thought would be up to the 2011/12 Premier League challenge. Here, Saints fan Geoff Smith, from Hedge End, has his say ...

team? Was he injured? I still think he can give us some experience, good player to keep in squad.

Steve De Ridder: All the hype, but to me failed to deliver on a few occasions. He has speed and some ability, but it is difficult to come off the bench and change things every time. I would keep him, though.

Lee Holmes: Let him go and get the football he deserves. He had a night-

mare with injuries, but still not a Premier League player.

Guly do Prado: I like his work rate, and enthusiasm, good football brain, although since the Pompey game, fans have been on his back. He looks to have lost confidence, and does not look to take on defenders as he once did, hence his goals have dried up. Definitely a player I would keep.

Rickie Lambert: Nothing to say. Will do well and deserves to.

Lee Barnard: Let him go, not Premier League standard.

Billy Sharp: Good in the box, not the best touch in the world, but could cause problems. A good player to have.

Tadanari Lee: Haven't seen a lot of him, a shame he had the injury. But he looks a handful, plenty of running, with a bit of luck and composure he could have had 4-5 goals for us.

David Connolly: Good player, but age and injuries have stopped him

from playing more. Sorry, but we have to let him go.

Jonathan Forte: Let him go.

We need ...

● Two good full backs that can defend.

● Two midfielders that can get box to box, who can win and pass a ball (everyone is looking for this type of player). This may call for some with Premier League experience.

● Good wide man, who can deliver a good ball into the box.

● Plus one more forward to help us score goals.

I know many fans will not agree, but I still think the squad at the moment is NOT good enough to stay up.

We hear that we are going to spend. Let's hope we do not miss the boat, and get in early so the players can gel during the pre-season training and friendlies.

Crouch worth a recall

FORMER England striker Dion Dublin feels new manager Roy Hodgson will have plenty of "refreshing" attacking options for his Euro 2012 squad, but would look no further than ex-Saint Peter Crouch for Poland and Ukraine.



Hodgson will officially take up his post after Sunday's final Barclays Premier League game of the season between his club West Brom and Arsenal.

The former Switzerland, Liverpool and Fulham manager will name his squad for the European Championships next Wednesday, with a final submission being made to UEFA on May 29.

Hodgson, 64, has two friendlies against Norway and Belgium before the first match of the tournament against France on June 11 in Donetsk.

With Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney banned for the first two group games, there has been great debate as to who should start in attack at the Donbass Arena.

And Dublin, who won four England caps, believes England would be best served to call on the services of Stoke's Crouch,



PETER CROUCH

who has scored 10 times in the Premier League this season.

"It will be interesting and it is refreshing to have strikers coming into form towards the end of the season," Dublin said.

"My first choice striker would always be Wayne, but away from him it would always be Peter Crouch because people just do not know how to mark him.

"Andy Carroll has raised his level in the last two or three games, Grant Holt is always going to be a handful, so is Bobby Zamora. There are a lot of good strikers."

Crouch won the last of his 42 caps against France at Wembley in November 2010, when he scored a late goal to take his international tally to 22.

Dublin added: "Crouchy is not the kind of person who would cry because he is not being picked, he would always put himself in the frame to be.

"His record is better than anybody else's as a striker in terms of games to goals for England, so on that basis I think he should go.

"Plus, he brings a hell of a lot to the side which no other striker could bring."

Goal-line technology

From Front Page

authorised suppliers of goal-line technology and were chosen for the next testing phase by the IFAB.

Barry was at the beginning of second-phase testing on Hawk-Eye's system this week in Southampton, where independent body Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Testing and Research (EMPA) undertook on-field research.

Another match will be tested as well, apart from the Hampshire Senior Cup final, before the IFAB decide on July 2 whether to approve the system.

"The international board first started looking at the technology in 2005," Barry, the FA's head of senior referee development, said.

"The technology has moved on greatly since then when you look at Hawk-Eye and the quality of their cameras.

"I think really there has been the attitude that we should really try to help the referees for this very, very factual decision.

"The ball is either over the line or it isn't. It is not a matter of opinion - it is a matter of fact.

"What we're trying to say is 'let's find a technology that works, that



CONTROVERSY: The debate over goal-line technology was ignited again after Chelsea were awarded a goal during their FA Cup semi-final win against Spurs when the ball had clearly not gone anywhere near the line.

actually gives the referee that vital information', because in reality the most important decision in a game is whether a goal has been scored or not.

"We're trying to give the referee as much as help as we can, assuming the technology works and we can get it licensed, but we're very, very positive [it will]."

Some have voiced concerns that the introduction of goal-line systems will result in a host of other technologies being introduced to the game.

Barry, though, remains philosophical about it and, while admitting that may come later down the line, he insists the importance of goal-line technology cannot be overlooked.

"The international board have made it very, very clear that at this moment of time we're only looking at goal-line technology," he said.

"The reason we're only looking at goal-line technology is because it is a matter of fact whereas everything else is a matter of opinion.

"We may well have that debate some time in the future but currently we're just working on goal-line technology.

"I am not in favour [of looking at everything else] but that is just one person's opinion. We will undoubtedly have the debate in future years but the main thing for me is let's get goal-line technology in.

"That's the major decision."

AND so it comes to an end.

Year three of the Leibherr reign comes to an amazing, heart stopping end amid scenes of complete and utter joy.

A 4-0 win, a pitch invasion, players wafted back to the Itchen stand on the shoulders of thousands of Saints fans for whom this season has been quite simply the best season we've seen here at Southampton for a decade or more.

It's at times like this, after the dust settles, the euphoria dies down and you sit down and take stock of things, that you suddenly realise just what a stunning achievement our promotion to the Premier League is.

I didn't realise until I looked at the photographs on my phone from the last three years.

Under the labels of Wembley 2010, Southend 2010, Promotion 2011 and Promotion 2012 you suddenly realise just how far we've come under Nicola Cortese's regime.

Two successive promotions, a winning visit to Wembley in the JPT.

The results of the last three years have been just mind blowing.

I don't think I'm over stating matters when I say that Southampton's rise from the ashes is nothing short of one of football's most impressive domestic achievements.

Think about it for a second.

Three years ago we were in League One, on minus ten points and, according to plenty of people, prime candidates for relegation again.

Instead, we came within a whisker of the playoffs and dominated the JPT to win at Wembley amid scenes of utter joy with over 50,000 Saints fans.

Our rise back to the Premiership is nothing short of staggering.

Forget what those down the road will tell you, the JPT was a viable piece of silverware won with honest money, won with talent that was bought and paid for legitimately.

It signalled the start of a transformation from perpetual losers and makers dos to winners.

People may mock the JPT but you can never underestimate the effect it had on us as a club.

The following season saw Saints as the dominant force in League One.

Brighton fans will tell you they won the title, but the truth was they couldn't keep up with us and had the season gone on one more game we'd have been champions rather than them.

Was there a better footballing team than Saints that season?

No, I think not...

This season Saints were a revelation.

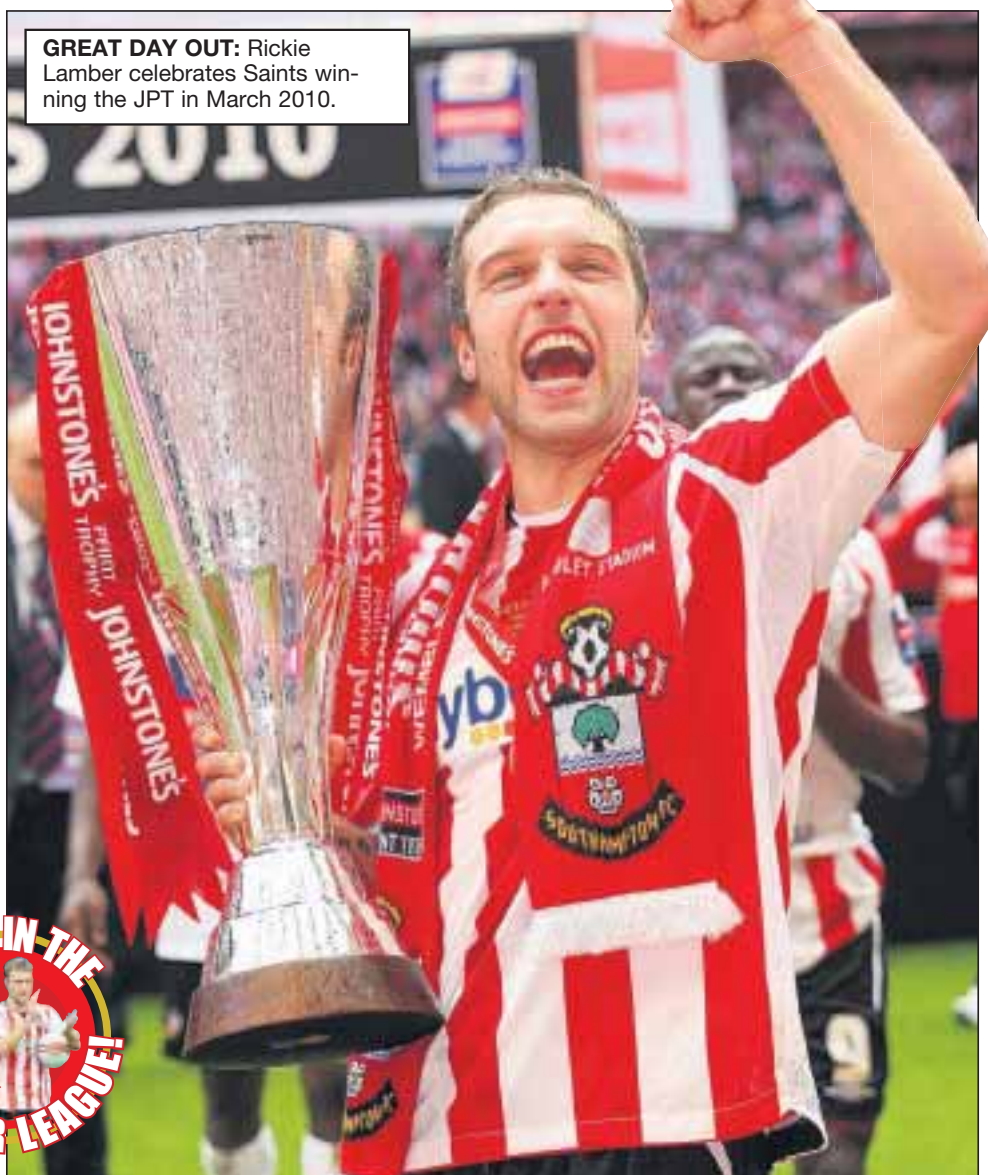
None of us expected what we got. Mid table, play-offs at best, we thought.

What we got was a club that never slipped below the top two all season, something the pre season favourites West Ham and Leicester never achieved.

Again, Reading will tell you they were the champions.

But anyone who knows how football should be played will tell you that Saints were the best team

GREAT DAY OUT: Rickie Lambert celebrates Saints winning the JPT in March 2010.



No longer the big fish in a small pond

in the Championship this season.

Take away the kits and the players names and ask any Reading fan which side they would prefer to pay to watch week in, week out?

And now we face the most unusual, challenging season in years.

For the last three years Saints have been big fishes in small ponds.

This season coming we'll be the new boys, the team that most pundits feel will struggle and get relegated straight back down.

Thank God for Norwich and Swansea, who've finally broken the hoodoo that seemed to perpet-

ually jinx newly-promoted sides.

They've showed you can get promoted and not just survive, but flourish.

Part of the reason Saints flourished in the Championship was the winning mentality that goes back to the early days of Alan Pardew's reign.

It seems light years since you last could say that about a Southampton side.

For so long we appeared to be a club that was just making up the numbers in the Premier League.

It may have taken seven years in the wilderness but Southampton have emerged a stronger, leaner

club for it.

It was as if those seven years had stripped away all of the crap associated with us and left us with a club that is now genuinely a figure of envy rather than ridicule.

It would have been hard to imagine three years ago that Saints would be where they are now.

Don't under-estimate the scale of our success.

Don't over-estimate the trials and tribulations that face us.

In just three short years we've gone from being something of a joke to being top dogs on the south coast.

I'll leave you with one thought.

How many so-called experts told you Rickie Lambert would struggle to make an impression in the Championship?

He went on to be the best player in that league by a country mile.

What odds that the team that the those self same "experts" will now be predicting will be the Premiership whipping boys, don't go on to surprise everyone?

No one's expecting Champions League football next year.

But Saints are far from being the easy pickings people seem to think they will be.

I just can't wait for August...

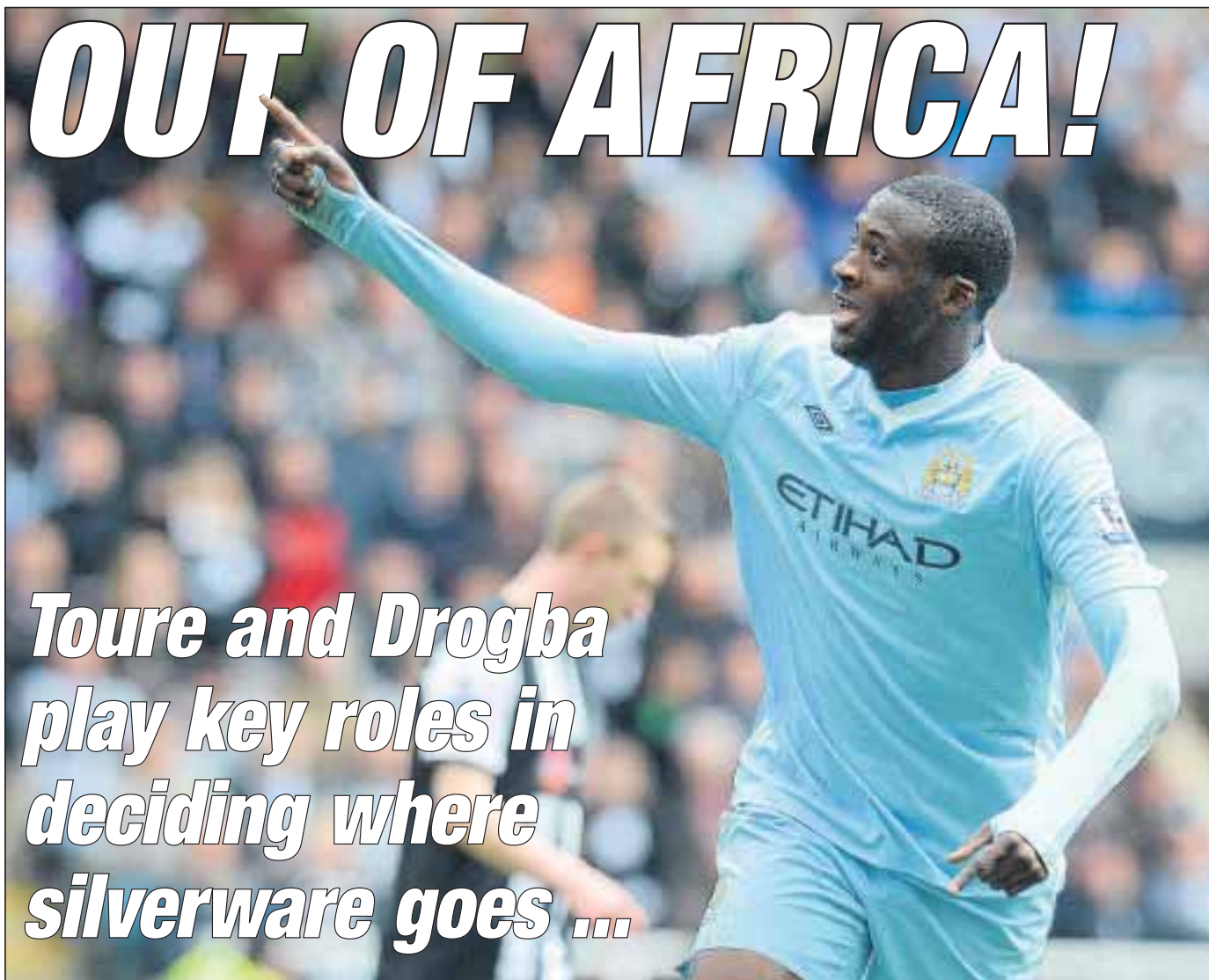
Paine's World

The Saints legend's **EXCLUSIVE** column on all things football



OUT OF AFRICA!

Toure and Drogba play key roles in deciding where silverware goes ...



AFRICAN STARS: YaYa Toure, above, celebrates scoring for Manchester City at Newcastle and, below, Chelsea's Didier Drogba.

AFRICA is very proud of its heritage when it comes to football.

Many African countries follow the European game with a passion.

Often a country will support a team in Europe that hosts a player from their nation, and the Premier League has a massive following on the continent.

The international feed is relayed across 52 countries by M-Net television and their sports channel, SuperSport.

Last weekend was a good one for African players in England.

Ivory Coast was well represented by Chelsea's Didier Drogba, with the big striker showing yet again why he loves playing in the FA Cup final.

His second-half strike put the Blues into a 2-0 lead against Liverpool, and at the same time created history by making him the first man to score in four FA Cup finals.

His influence will be badly needed when Chelsea face Bayern Munich in the Champions League final.

Perhaps more importantly, the question is will he still be at Stamford Bridge next season, as contract discussions have come to a standstill.

Meanwhile, Drogba's fellow Ivorian – and reigning African footballer of the year – Yaya Toure fired Manchester City to within touching distance of the title.

His two goals in the last 20 minutes at St James' Park blew away Newcastle and leaves City with a great opportunity to win the Premier League crown tomorrow for the first time in 44

years.

Watching past City great Mike Summerbee sitting in the stands at Newcastle took me back to the 1968 season when, under the guidance of their jolly manager Joe Mercer and his flamboyant coach Malcolm Allison, City assembled a side to

take on the best.

Francis Lee, Mike Doyle and the brilliant Colin Bell and Neil Young were just some of team that brought glory to the club all those years ago.

City now face QPR at home, a side fighting for their own Premier League life, and even the reported £1m incentive on offer to former Manchester City manager Mark

Hughes to keep the London club's head above water may not be enough. Perhaps the bus they arrive in at the Etihad Stadium could be parked on the pitch, as

they take on a team who have dropped just two points at home all season.

Spurs' on-loan striker Emmanuel Adebayor, of Togo, kept his nerve as he swept home the penalty that earned his Tottenham side a point against a disappointing Aston Villa.

Spurs are battling with Arsenal – away to West Brom this weekend – and Newcastle – away to Everton – for the Champions League places.

But they will need to beat an improving Fulham at White Hart Lane in order to clinch fourth spot and a probable place in the Champions League next season.

Whatever the outcome of this fascinating season, though, if Chelsea lift the Champions League against Bayern Munich then fourth place will not be good enough.

Tomorrow afternoon promises to bring an end to one of the most competitive Premier League seasons in years, with the title, Champions League places, and the last relegation place still to be decided.

Baxter a Kaizer Chief

GUESS who popped up in our neck of the woods?

None other than Stuart Baxter, the former Bafana Bafana coach.

Baxter, who resigned as South Africa boss in 2005, had failed to qualify the national team for the 2006 World Cup in Germany, although he did qualify for the 2006 African Cup of Nations.

His appointment as head coach of Sowetan giants Kaizer Chiefs has been met with dismay by many of the team's fans.

The ailing Chiefs have just fired their Serbian coach, Vladimir Vermezovic, and brought in Baxter to try and transform them.

Without a doubt, the Chiefs are the biggest club in South Africa and maybe the continent, with their fans estimated to be in the millions.



STUART BAXTER

But they are currently sixth in the local PSL championship.

Adding to their concerns is the fact that the other Sowetan giants and their fiercest rivals, Orlando Pirates, who top the league with two games left, have moved above them, causing many Chiefs fans to boycott games.

Baxter, 58, who will resume control for the start of next season, has coached in Japan, Sweden and the Finnish national team, while he was recently technical director at AIK Stockholm.

He will be under no illusions about the difficulty of the task at hand, with Chiefs fans in this country quick to vent their anger when results do not go their way.

The Englishman will have to be successful to complete his new two-year contract.



QUOTES of the week

"As a club manager, you are a manager. As a national team manager, you are a selector. You cannot work with and get the best out of the players all of the time because some are injured, some are not in a top moment, some are unhappy with their club's position, some have a problem with their manager. It's not a normal job. It's difficult to create something. You can't do something in a short space of time. The idea is to create the team spirit and winning mentality in a really short time. This is very difficult. It will be hard. And the other thing is that you don't play a lot of games. In nearly every game, you are either in or out." - **former England manager Fabio Capello offers some advice to successor Roy Hodgson.**



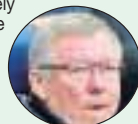
"I'm coming back. Write it down in big letters. I'm not going down like this" - **New York Yankees closer Mariano Rivera, 42, vows his torn cruciate ligament will not end his career.**

"I feel like a kid, feel like a kid scoring a winning goal. We were practising free-kicks out on the pitches today and, with the last free-kick, Ramires scored and he reacted like a kid would react. It's the same feeling for everyone, scoring a goal in a big game, a final, it's a dream" - **Didier Drogba on scoring a winning goal at Wembley before the FA Cup final.**



"When I was here with Claudio Ranieri, I had a problem with scoring at the time and he told me to visualise scoring, like basketball players visualise throwing it through the hoop rather than always doing it and doing it all the time. It's something I took on board" - **Frank Lampard on psychological techniques.**

"Look at the FA Cup final, a 15.15 kick-off, it's absolutely ridiculous. They have changed the FA Cup time for the most prestigious cup competition in the world just to get an audience. It's bedlam down there now. We owe so much for the revenue that television can bring us that they dominate us" - **Sir Alex Ferguson criticises moving the cup final kick-off time.**



"I'm not saying it's a guarantee but I think now is as good a time as ever. I know it might seem crazy but people close to me know what's going on" - **Ronnie O'Sullivan ponders retiring from snooker on the eve of the World Championship final.**

"If I think back eight years, I'm standing at the top of a tower block looking at the site with the IOC's evaluation teams, feeling a bit like a Costa Brava timeshare salesman, saying 'You see that rotting pile of fridges, that's where the stadium is going, and that's where the velodrome is going. And I'm hearing the words coming out and they are looking at me like 'Yeah?' We've come a long way really" - **London 2012 chairman Lord Coe.**



Saints Spotlight

Simon Carter

simon.carter@dailyecho.co.uk

SPORTS EDITOR

AT times, it is easy to forget just how popular football is at the highest level in England and Wales these days.

We have taken current interest levels in the national sport for granted.

Though the economy has taken a massive battering in recent times, we still have enough money, it seems, to splash out on watching quality professional football.

And, lest we forget, that's not a cheap past-time these days.

To illustrate just how many quantum leaps football has taken in terms of re-inventing itself as a sport worth watching, I did a quick bit of research this week.

On this page there are this season's average crowd figures for the Premiership and Championship, plus their equivalent averages for the season 1983/84.

Apart from just a couple of exceptions, every single club's average is now higher - and in many cases,



TURNING POINT: Gazzz's tears in Italia 90.

considerably so.

I chose that campaign for no other reason than it was the season Saints finished in their highest ever league position, second behind Liverpool.

I could have chosen 1985/86, where attendance levels slipped to an all-time post-war low.

Large swathes of the general public turned their backs on football following the twin tragedies of Bradford and Heysel in May 1985.

The Bradford fire, which caused over 50 deaths, was caused by a stray cigarette igniting years of rubbish piled high underneath the wooden main stand.

Valley Parade, City's ground, was no worse than many other Football League grounds at the time.

Decades of negligence, with regards to customer safety and comfort, were freely on view elsewhere.

As for Heysel, that was the mid-80s watershed with regards to hooliganism, the scourge of the beautiful game for many a year.

From the late 60s all the way through the often violent 70s, and into the first few years of Thatcherism, no-one - it appeared - could do anything to prevent its ugly head from often re-appearing.

INCREDIBLE

THE AMAZING STORY OF HOW FOOTBALL BECAME SEXY AGAIN ...



CHAMPIONSHIP AVERAGE CROWDS 2011/12

West Ham	30,923	21,386 (Div 1)
Saints	26,419	18,088 (Div 1)
Derby	26,020	12,858 (Div 2)
Leeds	23,379	15,493 (Div 2)
Leicester	23,036	14,923 (Div 1)
Cardiff	22,100	7,067 (Div 2)
Nottm Forest	21,969	17,698 (Div 1)
Brighton	20,029	12,275 (Div 2)
Reading	19,219	4,471 (Div 4)
Birmingham	19,126	14,106 (Div 1)
Hull	18,790	8,135 (Div 3)
Ipswich	18,266	17,464 (Div 1)
Middlesbrough	17,557	8,474 (Div 2)
Crystal Palace	15,219	8,199 (Div 2)
Coventry	15,118	12,572 (Div 2)
Portsmouth	15,044	13,196 (Div 2)
Burnley	14,048	6,625 (Div 3)
Bristol City	13,907	7,287 (Div 4)
Blackpool	12,764	3,936 (Div 4)
Watford	12,710	16,510 (Div 1)
Millwall	11,484	4,351 (Div 3)
Barnsley	10,331	9,738 (Div 2)
Doncaster	9,341	3,778 (Div 4)
Peterborough	9,110	3,424 (Div 4)

PREMIERSHIP AVERAGE CROWDS 2011/12

Man United	75,381	42,534 (Div 1)
Arsenal	59,995	28,116 (Div 1)
Newcastle	50,039	29,810 (Div 2)
Man City	46,991	25,604 (Div 2)
Liverpool	44,449	31,974 (Div 1)
Chelsea	41,519	21,119 (Div 2)
Sunderland	38,686	16,180 (Div 1)
Tottenham	36,013	28,701 (Div 1)
Aston Villa	33,851	21,370 (Div 1)
Everton	33,068	19,343 (Div 1)
Stoke City	27,194	13,900 (Div 1)
Norwich City	26,539	15,659 (Div 1)
Wolves	25,564	12,478 (Div 1)
Fulham	25,271	8,143 (Div 2)
West Brom	24,823	14,568 (Div 1)
Bolton	23,559	5,892 (Div 3)
Blackburn	22,351	7,622 (Div 2)
Swansea	19,909	6,980 (Div 2)
Wigan	18,449	3,899 (Div 3)
QPR	17,294	15,370 (Div 1)

Hooliganism wasn't just a First Division scourge, it was all the way down into the fourth tier, and no doubt into the non league scene too.

Bradford and Heysel, for many, were the last straws.

Football was dying as a spectator sport, and the critics were lining up to - pardon the analogy - put the boot in.

There was nothing remotely sexy about being a football fan back then.

Look at the change now.

EMAIL YOUR SPORTS STORIES TO echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

Saints Spotlight

RISE AND RISE



Back in the early to mid 1980s Nottingham Forest were one of the top clubs in England, but in 2011/12 they averaged more fans for a dismal second tier campaign than back in 1983/84.

Ditto Coventry, who have just endured as miserable a Championship season as it's possible to have – but who still averaged more fans than they did back in the top flight in 1983/84!

Reading were a Fourth Division club back in 1983/84, so it's no surprise their average crowds have rocketed – more than four times

higher in 2011/12.

Among other Championship clubs this season, the likes of Doncaster, Millwall, Peterborough, Burnley, Blackpool, Hull and Derby have all more than doubled their average crowds.

The story is even better in the Premiership.

Wigan's crowds this season are almost FIVE times higher than they were in 1983/84, while Bolton's are also four times higher and Fulham's gates have tripled.

Stoke, Sunderland, Chelsea and Wolves have also doubled their

average of 28 years ago.

How has this metamorphosis occurred?

Is it too easy an argument to say that dismal facilities and the threat of getting caught up in hooliganism made so many people stay away?

Possibly not.

In these very pages in recent years, I have lamented the impact Rupert Murdoch's multi millions has had on turning the top division into a cash cow.

Say what you want, though, but you cannot question the fact facilities have improved immeasurably

since the mid-1980s.

Of course, a third tragedy – Hillsborough – was the catalyst for all-seater stadiums, rather than Bradford and/or Heysel.

But look at the facilities now compared to the mid 1980s.

Also, the stands are so much safer.

There are very few outbreaks of crowd disorder now, certainly in the stands.

Outside the stadiums, the problem still exists and there is no pretending it doesn't.

If it didn't exist, Saints and Pompey fans would not have been herded to the south coast derbies this season as part of a heavily police protected 'bubble' of coaches.

So, better facilities, more comfortable facilities, and a far safer atmosphere.

No wonder there are more families attending games these days than ever before.

There are also two more factors we must consider.

One is Murdoch's cash, which has allowed clubs to bring in top overseas talent, while back in the 1980s foreign players were still rather a novelty.

As a result of more money now



WATERSHED: The 1989 Hillsborough tragedy.

swimming around the elite clubs, so billionaire overseas owners have been attracted to the Premier League.

That, in turn, has resulted in even bigger salaries and an even bigger transfer fees.

But you cannot deny that all the cash has not been put to good use.

The fourth factor, and a less obvious one to many, was Gazza's tears in Italia 90.

His watery eyes as England so nearly reached their first overseas World Cup final was an image which burned into the minds of thousands, millions even, of non-football fans.

Gazza was the very public face of the rebirth of football as a worthwhile spectator sport.

The Premier League remains the top league in the world, and that is why Saints and their fanbase are absolutely delighted to be back there.

They will pack out St Mary's next season – win, lose or draw – because their favourites are in the 'golden league', as West Ham boss Sam Allardyce described it this week.

Saints fans are fortunate, because this is a great time to watch football at the top level. But as we can see, it wasn't always thus ...

QUOTES of the week

"The fight is off! sorry everyone the only person to blame is @kingpete26 I'll be looking for a opponent to fight June 30th" - Amir Khan takes to Twitter to lay the blame for the cancellation of his world light-welterweight title fight against Lamont Peterson solely at the American's door following his failed drug test.



"Never mind £80million, I'm saying to myself now that it should have been £800million" - Sir Alex Ferguson is starting to feel he let Cristiano Ronaldo go on the cheap.

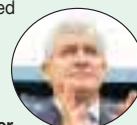
"Maybe I should develop one. I'm a football coach. That's been the whole of my life. Dealing with the mass media has been a part of that. I have not shied away from it and it hasn't bothered me. It's part of my duties" - England manager Roy Hodgson talks about needing a thick skin in order to deal with the media.

"It's a non-starter. That didn't come into the decision-making at all" - Sir Trevor Brooking dismisses speculation that he blamed Harry Redknapp for Billy Bonds losing his job as West Ham manager and that led to Redknapp, now manager at Tottenham, losing out to Roy Hodgson as the new England manager.



"He's not 65. He's a top professional" - Chelsea manager Roberto Di Matteo pays tribute to Didier Drogba after the striker scored in Chelsea's 2-1 win over Liverpool in the FA Cup final.

"QPR need a point and they're fighting for survival. The whole future of the club could be resting on the game and I only wish Sparky was playing. But Mark knows his job all right. He was sacked by City in a very unethical way and he'll remember that" - Sir Alex Ferguson puts his trust in Manchester United old boy Mark Hughes, whose QPR side face his old club Manchester City on the last day of the season. United need City to slip up if they are to win the title.



"I have taken a lot of weight on my shoulders this season. I was happy to take pressure off the players. I am not going to again next season, though. They had better get their finger out" - Aston Villa boss Alex McLeish.

"It is difficult to put into words what the atmosphere is like in the dressing room. A few things were thrown our way in the media last week, questioning our attitude, but I felt tonight we gave it a real good go. The disappointing thing is we couldn't take it to the last game. I will sit down with the owners and discuss a plan on how to assemble a squad to help us bounce back up straight away". Blackburn boss Steve Kean after relegation was confirmed.



YOU CAN PHONE SPORTS EDITOR SIMON CARTER ON 02380 424515

Mancini: This is not about me!

MANCHESTER City boss Roberto Mancini has downplayed attempts to build up this weekend's title crunch against QPR as a grudge match between him and Mark Hughes.

Ex-Saints striker Hughes, Mancini's predecessor, returns to the Etihad Stadium with his new side on Sunday for a match that has major implications at the top and bottom of the Premier League.

Victory for City would secure a first title for 44 years but anything less would open the door for great rivals Manchester United to reclaim the crown, and they face a QPR side anxious for points.

Rangers need to avoid defeat to be sure of avoiding relegation without relying on other results and, given the manner of his departure from City in 2009, it is felt Hughes has double incentive to succeed.

But Mancini, whose managerial style has been criticised by Hughes in the past, insists footballing matters are all that are relevant.

The Italian said: "This is not important - on Sunday we play Manchester City against QPR."

"For me, they are a good team, they don't deserve to stay at the bottom."

"They want to do everything to stay in the Premier League and for this reason it will be a tough game."

"I don't know him very well but it is not Mancini against Hughes or Hughes against Mancini. It is City against QPR."

"One team plays for the title, the other plays for (to avoid) relegation."

City lead the table on goal difference from United heading into the final fixture and know, with an advantage of eight under that criteria, they effectively control their own destiny.

City regained the lead with victory in a tense Manchester derby before they came through a stern test at Newcastle.

But, as tough as those games were, Mancini feels the hardest assignment lies ahead of them.

He believes City must win because he expects United to have little trouble in their last game at Sunderland.

He said: "In this situation we are playing a team playing against relegation. It will be hard, more difficult than Newcastle, more than United."

"Sunderland play for nothing. I am sure they will play 100%, but they play for nothing in their last game."

"It was the same against Newcastle. Newcastle played for Champions League and Swansea [United's last opponents] for nothing. For this reason it is an easier game (for United)."



MANCINI

Saints Spotlight

MILAN: I WANT TO

MILAN Mandaric wants his Sheffield Wednesday side to copy Saints and Norwich by winning back to back promotions into the Premier League.

The Owls chairman is dreaming of spending just one season in the Championship after winning automatic promotion from League 1 in 2011/12.

Mandaric, the former Pompey chairman, insists that top-flight football "has to happen" at Hillsborough sooner or later and the club belongs among the country's top 10.

Spotlighting the feat of Saints and Norwich, he said: "Any successful and progressive person would have to say 'if you can do it, why can't I?'"

"They are great clubs. They have done good jobs."

"This club is not smaller than those."

"We also have a bursting desire to be there. So why not?"

"This club was in the Premier League before."

"It deserves to be there. If it doesn't go to the Premier League, whoever is here during the time that process is being done is not very successful."

"It might take it more than one year, two years or three years, but it's got to be the direction of this club."

"It can't go back now."

"You've got to build a club."

"It has to happen, simple as that."

Mandaric, who was Pompey's owner until selling an initial 50 per cent stake to Sacha Gaydemak in January 2006, regards the £20m that it has cost him to buy and run the Owls over the last 16 months as an investment rather than a loss.

He is looking to back ex-Saints boss Dave Jones with funds, aiming both to consolidate next season and challenge for another promotion.

"You have to make sure your foundation is firm, so you can build on that - we're getting there. You don't want to slip back," he said.

"I'm not going to tell you here we're going to be promoted next season to the Premier League - that would be the wrong thing to do. But we do have a plan to get there."

Dreams do come true ... but miracles take a little longer ...!

JUBILANT scenes at Hillsborough had barely subsided when Dave Jones, wearing a blue sweatshirt, was asked whether he expected financial backing from Milan Mandaric to keep Wednesday on the up.

"The first thing he's got to do is buy me a new suit," quipped the manager, his usual smart attire discarded and soaked in champagne.

Jones knows the task facing him in achieving Mandaric's stated aim of returning Wednesday to the Premier League.

"Southampton and Norwich have done brilliantly. But the hardest part is staying in it. The easy part sometimes is getting there," said the ex-Dell manager.

"This club has had a history for 15 years of being basically on the slide."

"I didn't come here just to consolidate. I came here to try to build a club. If it comes off, it will be fantastic and another notch on my CV."

"I've said to the chairman dreams do sometimes come true. Miracles might take a bit longer, but if you have the right infrastructure, the right backing and the right fan base, you've got those ticks in the box."

"The only one they haven't got at the moment is the team, and that's the hardest one."

Jones was appointed Owls boss back in February after Mandaric's shock

decision to sack Gary Megson in the wake of a 1-0 derby victory over Sheffield United.

Mandaric almost quit the club following a backlash from fans when he installed Jones as manager with the club lying third, two points behind their cross city rivals, who had two games in hand.

Megson lost his job on the back of two wins from 10 games, but the Owls have not lost under Jones and 10 victories and three draws later the club overhauled their city rivals to clinch automatic promotion.

When asked if he now felt vindicated in his decision to get rid of fans' favourite Megson, Mandaric said: "To be honest it's not so much that, I'm just so happy with this situation."

"I'm more concerned with what happens next. But we had no consistency. I did not want the play-offs."

"We all know where things are and what happened there and I don't want to go into all that again, but he has been a part of the season and I don't want to take anything away from him."

"But I had to do what I did. I sensed we were on a slippery slope."

"Some people were not with me at the time, but I did it for the good of the club."

"We did not have a team that looked like they would get promoted."

one day he may decide to leave and be proud of the job he had done.

But the 73-year-old added: "The more I stay with this club, the more I think it will be my last club."

"It is a special club."

He also said the Owls

future would be guided by a "committed and capable" Jones, who has now won promotion from all three Football League divisions after previous elevations with Stockport and Wolves either side of his time at The Dell.

"It is a perfect situation for the club. We are very lucky to have a manager like him," said Mandaric.



LOCAL CRICKET APPEARS ON PAGES 26/27

Saints Spotlight

COPY SAINTS!

Wembley hero
Antonio keen
on a return

SAINTS' Wembley hero Michail Antonio is fancying a return to Hillsborough next season after relishing his key role in the Owls' promotion to the Championship.

"I have enjoyed every single minute," said the winger after playing a key role in taking the Owls back to the second tier after a two-season absence.

Antonio must wait to see what parent club Reading - newly promoted to Premier League - want to do after letting him spend the last 10 weeks of the campaign out on loan.

"Right now I don't know what's going to happen and I'm probably going to back to Reading for pre-season, but anything can happen in the summer," said the winger.

"I could be in their 25-man squad, or I could be somewhere else."

A return to Hillsborough appeals to him: "I have enjoyed my time here; I could never say 'no'. The fans have taken to me and I have taken to the club."

Antonio spent a successful time at St Mary's on loan from Reading in 2009/10 under Alan Pardew.

His most memorable game came

in the JPT final against Carlisle at Wembley when he netted Saints' third goal.

Antonio added: "I came here to play games - I've played in 14 games and had 90 minutes in most of them; it's given me confidence and I've got goals and done well."

Among his five for Wednesday were his injury-time strike against Carlisle, which earned a hugely significant 2-1 win last month, and the opener in the promotion-clinching victory against Wycombe at Hillsborough last Saturday.

"There was so much pressure on us to win that game," he says. "For me to get the goal so we could settle down and play our football, it felt so good."

The 22-year-old has thrilled fans with exciting wing play as well as his goals.

He also scored four while on loan at Colchester earlier this term.

He says confidence has underpinned his success.

"When I go out there I just tell myself I'm the best on the pitch; sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't," he remarked.

"I believe in my ability."



ON TARGET: Michail Antonio nets for Saints against Carlisle in the JPT final at Wembley and, top right, scores against the same team in the league a few weeks later in April 2010.

PG tipped to
succeed at
Cherries

CHAIRMAN Eddie Mitchell defended the appointment of Paul Groves and then called for disgruntled AFC Bournemouth supporters to trust him and back the new boss.

The announcement of Groves as Lee Bradbury's permanent successor yesterday sparked a backlash from some sections of the Cherries fan-base, writes **NEIL PERRETT.**

A number of fans had called for a high-profile manager with more experience after a string of names, including ex-Saint Glenn Hoddle and two former Premier League stars, had been linked with the vacancy.

But Mitchell urged fans to unite behind Groves and assistant boss Shaun Brooks.

The Cherries chief said: "We have all got our opinions but they have got to entrust their club in me because I am the chairman and I have to make those decisions."

"They are not easy decisions and I do listen to lots of peoples' comments but I have to do what I think is right for the club."

"I have known Shaun (Brooks, new assistant manager) longer than Paul but no way is he a yes man. I think you will soon get to know that Paul is not a yes man either."

Mitchell continued: "If I listened to all the fans, we would have about 1,000 managers. There have been so many



PAUL GROVES

names banded around.

"We are never going to please everybody but Paul and Shaun will be doing their best for the club and I am sure the fans will do their best for the club. That is to get behind who is out there leading the team and encouraging them to do well."

Groves and Brooks signed two-year contracts following an eight-game stint in caretaker charge since Bradbury's exit.

Asked whether Groves was the man to lead Cherries' push for promotion to the Championship, Mitchell said: "I don't think Paul will be doing it on his own and there will be all sorts of people involved in it, including myself. It is a joint team effort and no one man can do it on their own."

"It is a case of getting the right people around you and that starts from me right the way down and I do think Paul is the right person to take us there."

Mitchell revealed there had been "quite a lot" of interest in the vacancy but when asked about Hoddle, he said: "I wouldn't want to comment on other people."

"It is not fair on them and it is not the club's thing to do."

"But there have been lots of household names."

Mitchell said the situation regarding ex-assistant Russ Wilcox, who was placed on gardening leave following Bradbury's exit, remained "ongoing". He declined to comment further.

SOUTHERN
Daily Echo

FIND THE BALL



THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT

£18,000

or £1,600 nearest miss prize...

PLUS 70 consolation prizes of £15 each week**20 for Southern Daily Echo
20 for Daily Echo Bournemouth
10 for Dorset Echo
10 for Sunday Independent
10 for Brighton Argus**

FIND THE BALL is a test of skill and football knowledge and is open to readers of the Southampton, Bournemouth, Dorset Echos, Brighton Argus and Sunday Independent, Plymouth.

You have to use your skill and judgement to determine the exact centre of the ball.

Mark an X with a ballpoint pen on the picture where you consider that position to be – clear rubber stamps and self adhesive labels will also be accepted.

Every coupon will be carefully examined and the jackpot prize will be paid to the entrant whose cross marks the exact centre of the ball when the photograph was taken.

If the Jackpot is not won, £1,000 will be added to next week's jackpot and £50 will be added to the nearest-miss prize.

The nearest-miss prize will be paid out to the competitor whose cross is nearest to the centre of the ball when there is no jackpot winner.

When a jackpot has been won the next week's prize reverts back to £6,000 and the nearest-miss prize at £1,000.

If the Jackpot is not won after 45 weeks, when standing at £50,000, three nearest miss prizes will be awarded totalling £24,000 – with a first prize of £12,000, a second prize of £8,000 and a third prize of £4,000.

The jackpot for the following week will be £26,000 with £1,000 being added each week. The nearest miss prize will be £2,000 with £50 added each week until the jackpot prize reaches £50,000.

If there is still no entry showing the exact centre of the ball, the process is repeated until there is an exact centre of the ball winner.

If there is more than one winner the jackpot will be shared and, similarly, if there is more than one runner-up the nearest miss prize will also be shared.

RESULTS



CLOSING DATE FOR POSTAL ENTRIES
Thursday 9am,
17 May
2012
Names of winners will be published on
Saturday, 19 May
or **Sunday 20 May**
2012

An incident in a Coventry v Southampton match

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE ONLY



Please use black/blue ink and capitals

May 12, 2012 Please cross box

TITLE ☐ MR ☐ MRS ☐ MISS ☐ MS

FIRST NAME

SURNAME

ADDRESS No.

POSTCODE

DAYTIME TELEPHONE

S19

☐ Please cross the box if you do not wish to receive information about other Daily Echo promotions

On what day(s) do you purchase the Daily Echo?
☐ MON ☐ TUE ☐ WED ☐ THURS ☐ FRI ☐ SAT

Do you have the paper home delivered?
☐ YES ☐ NO

60 CROSSES £1

125 CROSSES £2

200 CROSSES £3

325 CROSSES £4

SAVE POSTAGE

For your convenience coupons may be posted in our **FIND THE BALL** collecting boxes located at selected newsagents and all branch offices

Deadlines for branch office collection boxes are as follows:
Bournemouth Echo
12 noon Tuesday
Southern Daily Echo
12 noon Tuesday
Dorset Echo
Closing time Monday

Deadlines for selected newsagents collection boxes as listed in:
Bournemouth Echo
closing time Monday
Southern Daily Echo
10.00 am Tuesday
Dorset Echo
Closing time Monday

A list of participating newsagents will be published in the Echos on the first Saturday of each month

PLEASE NOTE:
NEW COLLECTION TIMES FOR NEWSAGENTS

Please complete entry form and send to:
FTB
PO BOX 24
Competitions
Southampton
SO16 9ZD
Cheques payable to Newsquest

Winners

Competition number **S18**

JACKPOT WINNER NO WINNER

CONGRATULATIONS

Mrs S Hiddleston, Poole
who wins the Runner Up prize of £1,550

The following competitors each receive a consolation prize of **£15**

Mr M Baker, Southampton, Hants	Miss K Harnett, Southampton, Hants
Mrs L Bassett, Southampton, Hants	Mr R Horne, Southampton, Hants
Mr J Bouttet, Eastleigh, Hants	Mrs J Jenkins, Fareham, Hants
Mr A Bushnell, Southampton, Hants	Mrs J Masters, Southampton, Hants
Mrs T Chameberlain, Fareham, Hants	Mrs J Matuszewska, Eastleigh, Hants
Mrs W Cox, Fareham, Hants	Mr J Moore, Southampton, Hants
Mrs J Cutler, Southampton, Hants	Mr R Nias, Eastleigh, Hants, Hants
Miss D Forder, Southampton, Hants	Mrs A Staples, Lee On Solent, Hants
Mr J Gardner, Wickham, Hants	Mr R Travers, Southampton, Hants
Miss L Gumma, Eastleigh, Hants	Mrs M Wolfe, Southampton, Hants

Rules

1. You are allowed a minimum of 60 crosses and a maximum of 325 per coupon. Coupons with 326 or more will be disqualified. Entries altered defaced or mutilated will be invalid. Crosses must be distinct and separate. **2.** Competitors may submit as many coupons as they wish. Members of a family can send their entries in one envelope with a covering postal order or cheque. **3.** No responsibility can be accepted for entries delayed, lost or mislaid. Proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery. **4.** Payment may be made by postal order or cheque for the correct amount payable to Newsquest, and crossed 'X' Co.' Stamps **will not** be accepted in payment. **5.** A competitor cannot win more than one share of the prize money across all titles each week. **6.** The Editor's decision on winning entry or entries and matters relating to this competition is binding in honour only. **NO CORRESPONDENCE CAN BE ENTERED INTO.** **7.** Employees of NEWSQUEST Media Group and subsidiary companies and members of their families are not eligible to enter the competition. **8.** Address entries to FTB PO Box 24 Competitions, Southampton SO16 9ZD in a sealed envelope. Understamped entries are not accepted. **9.** Prize monies are held for and on behalf of winners. **10.** Do not send cash in the post. **11.** Winners will be required to participate in publicity. **12.** Photocopies not accepted. **13.** For rules go to www.dailyecho.co.uk/promotions/rules, www.newsquest.co.uk/terms or write in for a copy.

Daily Echo

Adam Rant

This week's big talking points
with **Adam Leitch**

The gap is not a huge one

IT seems so strange for the football season to still be carrying on long after Saints last kicked a ball.

Such is the way it has worked out because of all the events this summer and the need to get the Championship play-offs done.

Adam Rant cannot be the only person connected with Saints to decide the last couple of weeks of the Premier League as an opportune time to take a look at what the opposition will be like at St Mary's next season.

It's not that the Premier League has been totally ignored since Saints were relegated but, after they went down to League One, it always seemed a long way away.



WHO ARE YA?
Blackburn v Wigan.

Perhaps slightly embarrassingly, Adam Rant has to admit that in a few games featuring middling to lower Premier League sides he didn't actually know who quite a lot of the players were.

One immediate observation, though, would be that those sorts of teams are not that much better than what you see in the Championship.

The top sides in the Premier League are clearly a world away from the second tier, and you'd expect that.

But you cannot tell me that the teams in the bottom third of the Premier League and the teams in the top third of the Championship are poles apart.

Alright, perhaps the Premier League sides may have a slight edge on experience and quality, but it's not so much to make an unbridgeable gap.

And the other thing about those top flight teams is that their matches against each other are not even half as exciting as the ones in the Championship.

They seem so scared to lose a lot of the time that it stifles the football, whereas the Championship is all about taking the initiative to win.

Saints do have a tough task to make the step up, of course, but it's not totally insurmountable.

Simply, he's the greatest!



JUDGING who is the greatest ever in any sport is a task fraught with difficulty.

Are you looking for the most talented, the most successful, the most entertaining, the biggest contribution to the sport, or something else entirely?

It's the stuff of many a long debate, but there are no easy, simple, totally correct answers.

Adam Rant does acknowledge that the arguments can be somewhat pointless, as trying to compare sportsmen across eras is so tough.

The competition, the equipment, even the rules can have changed.

However, he cannot pretend not to partake and this last week has been no exception as he has named one sportsman the greatest ever in his field and said another is not yet there.

The man whose career ambition has no doubt been fulfilled by this nod is none other than 'The Rocket', Ronnie O'Sullivan.

Any lingering doubt was cast aside by the maverick's fourth World Championship title win.

In Adam Rant's book, this lifted him above another boyhood hero of the green baize, Stephen Hendry.

Hendry, who officially retired last week, is slightly misunderstood.

He may come across as a dour character but, make no mistake, the way he played the game changed snooker forever.

He was as attacking and exciting as they come, and he won a record seven World titles.

You might think that would be enough to usurp O'Sullivan.

But yet there is something so magical about Ronnie, something that transcends his sport.

With four titles, he has joined the elite. Nobody can

say he hasn't achieved.

Alright, he could win a lot more, and could have won a lot more if he was a machine.

But it's that chemistry in his mind that has contributed to the genius on the table.

You would not have one without the other.

O'Sullivan has been the blockbuster star of the game for a long time. Only his presence stopped it from falling off the radar altogether before Barry Hearn took charge.

He deserves to be recognised as the best ever.

The man who will no doubt be in tears upon hearing of his less fortunate fate is Lionel Messi.

He does have the misfortune for such a debate of playing in a team sport, which is far less easy to judge than an individual one.

But even so, and after 72 goals and counting this season, he still has more to do.

He is without doubt an exceptional talent, a wonderful footballer, but at this stage in his career he cannot be considered as the greatest the sport has ever seen.

Given the era in which he is playing, Messi needs to do something away from Barcelona to be a genuine contender.

He really needs to prove himself elsewhere, that his talent is not just able to shine brightest because of those around him with whom he has played for so long.

To get to that stage he needs to prove effective up against a non-Spanish style of defender and team.

That means either leaving Barca and doing the business in another country, probably the Premier League, or at international level in a major tournament.

Only then can he be right up there with the Peles and Maradonas of the world.

He's great, but not the greatest – unlike the wonderful O'Sullivan.

THE GREATEST: Ronnie O'Sullivan celebrates his fourth World title with his son, also called Ronnie, at The Crucible.

Home Choose Carpets



Over 20 Years Experience
100's of Carpet & Vinyl Samples to choose from,
In the comfort of your own Home

- FREE FITTING • FREE ESTIMATES
- FREE DELIVERY
- FREE UPLIFT & DISPOSAL OF OLD CARPETS

We move your Furniture **FREE** of charge

Please Ring 02380 803100
Freephone 0800 0387722
for immediate attention

LIBERTY KITCHENS

COMPLETE DESIGN AND INSTALLATION

Call the experts



Kitchen design
& renovation

- Made to measure new kitchens
- Wall and floor tiling
- Building work
- Plastering
- Painting and decorating
- Replacement doors made to measure
- Sinks, taps & worktops
- New appliances

023 8042 8500



www.kitchens-southampton.co.uk

Showroom at 29 Salisbury Road Arcade | Totton | Southampton | SO40 3hx

SAVE NOW ON A NEW BOILER

Class A Vaillant Ecotec (WHICH magazine boiler of the year 2011), fully fitted and equipped with digital programmer. **FREE** system **Power Flush** (worth £300) for systems ordered before 11th June 2012.

A typical installation costs **JUST £1,625 + VAT*** all inclusive and we give a **5-year guarantee on all parts**.

*Subject to our FREE survey



AND KEEP ON SAVING

The Vaillant Ecotec boiler included in this offer is 92% efficient and will reduce your fuel bills—in many cases quite dramatically. It also produces hot water direct from the boiler on demand. Your hot water tank will be redundant and you will only heat the water you need when you need it

023 8036 6423

www.heatingmyhome.com



RENEW YOUR CARPET THE STRESS-LESS WAY

You're just 7 steps from a lovely fresh new carpet.. but without the nightmare of clearing your room in preparation

- 1 We will move all your furniture for you
- 2 Uplift and take away existing floor coverings
- 3 If required, we will secure any loose or squeaky floor boards you may have, including staircases
- 4 A comprehensive selection of carpets suitable for every room in your home fitted to the highest standard, 80/20 and 100% wool carpets, not forgetting a collection of carpets that can be cleaned with neat bleach, should you ever have a disastrous spillage that needs it
- 5 All offcuts and waste materials bagged up and taken away, the floor is then vacuumed, and your furniture repositioned.
- 6 Any door that needs trimming will be trimmed to fit your new carpet
- 7 A comprehensive job completed by our in house fitters for no more money than other companies charge and expect you to do half the work for them!

FEATURE FLOORING AND CARPETS

FREEPHONE 08009 158295 • SOUTHAMPTON 02380 736004

12 Upton Crescent, Nursling, Southampton SO16 8AB

e.mail info@featureflooringandcarpets.co.uk

www.lovemycarpet.co.uk

Currently rated 9.8
out of 10, with over
320 feedback



Relax and enjoy life to the full with a mobility healthcare chair from Dee Cee, Southampton's leading healthcare rise and recline specialist.



Free 5 year guarantee

FREE

RECHARGEABLE BATTERY PACK*

Emergency power in event of mains supply failure

- Offers up to 10 lift cycles
- Fits all powered rise/reclining chairs

*With any purchase of a Rise & Recline Chair on production of this advert.

Dee Cee is Southampton's leading healthcare rise and recline specialist and the longest established member of the Association of Master Upholsterers and Soft Furnishers in Southampton. We have the finest selection of Rise and Recline chairs in the area at very competitive prices. Visit our expert team, Derek and his partner Karen are waiting to help you find the perfect comfort solution for you!

Express delivery available.

Already have a favourite chair?

Why not add a lift and rise unit to your own chair.

For a Personal Home Appointment

Please Call

023 80 555 888

Showroom:

502 Portswood Road,

Southampton SO17 3SP

www.deeceupholstery.co.uk



GMA
GALLAGHER MOBILITY AIDS LTD

'Caring for you'

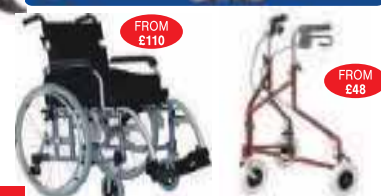
Free insurance with each new scooter

Lift and reclining chairs From £495

Available here

FROM £495

- USED EQUIPMENT BOUGHT AND SOLD
- HIRE FACILITIES
- FULL MAINTENANCE
- BATH LIFTS



FROM £110

FROM £48

Call NOW

EXTENSIVE RANGE OF WHEELCHAIRS AND 3 & 4 WHEELED WALKERS

Southampton 023 8055 7777

www.disabledaids.org.uk

Independence Building, Belgrave Road, Southampton SO17 3ES

tel: 023 8055 7777

or Unit 4, The Industrial Business Centre, Grange Road, Christchurch

tel: 01425 270666

Finance arranged subject to status

SAVE NOW ON A NEW BOILER

Class A Vaillant Ecotec (WHICH magazine boiler of the year 2011), fully fitted and equipped with digital programmer.

EXTENDED OFFER — FREE system Power Flush (worth £300)

A typical domestic installation costs **JUST £1,625 + VAT*** all inclusive and we give a **5-year guarantee on all parts**.

*Subject to our FREE survey

ALL SURVEYS ARE CARRIED OUT BY OUR OWN ENGINEERS
NO SALESMAN WILL VISIT



WEST QUAY ROAD SOUTHAMPTON

AND KEEP ON SAVING

The Vaillant Ecotec boiler included in this offer is 92% efficient and will reduce your fuel bills—in many cases quite dramatically. It also produces hot water direct from the boiler on demand. Your hot water tank will be redundant and you will only heat the water you need when you need it.

023 8036 6423

www.heatingmyhome.com



Take off to France... from Portsmouth

With a choice of daytime, overnight and high-speed services, plus a range of great value offers and break ideas, right now's the perfect time to enjoy a getaway to France



A day out with a difference from £23 per person



Take a leisurely cruise, or speed across to France and enjoy a day trip in one of our delightful port towns of St Malo, Caen or Cherbourg.

Perfect for a midweek trip, or weekend treat for the kids, you'll have plenty of time to see the sights, do a spot of shopping, or simply relax in a cosy café.

- Enjoy up to 24hrs away
- Take a leisurely cruise to Caen or St Malo
- Sail high speed to Caen or Cherbourg
- Mix and match routes to plan your ideal itinerary
- Free reserved seats or save 50% on cabins
- Take your car from just £29 extra*

Price per person travelling as a foot passenger. *Car based on minimum 2 travelling.

Cruise and stay Breaks without the car from £61 per person



Enjoy a day or two away with our choice of great value foot passenger breaks to Caen, Cherbourg or St Malo.

Following your sailing, you'll arrive with time to explore the sites, relax in a café or two, and enjoy an evening meal. You can then retire for the night to your hotel, where you'll enjoy breakfast the next morning, before your return sailing home.

- Choose from Caen or Cherbourg and make the most of your time away with our high-speed sailings
- Sail to St Malo, and you'll start your breakaway with an overnight cruise
- Enjoy a superb choice of hand-picked hotels, including breakfast
- For our full range of hotel offers visit our website

Price per person based on 2 sharing.

A place of your own Save up to 25% on cottage holidays



Looking to stay longer? Then choose one of our ferry-inclusive cottage holidays, with savings available throughout the year – even during school holidays!

Here you can enjoy the freedom to do as much or as little as you like. Spend a day at the coast, visit the local market, enjoy a scenic bike ride, or simply laze on the terrace with a glass of something chilled.

- Holiday prices include your return sailings
- Take your car and pack everything you need
- Choose from a range of properties in all sorts of locations from Brittany and Normandy, to the Loire and beyond
- Mix and match our routes to plan your ideal itinerary

Offer available on selected holidays.

Spring high-speed savings 2 days away from £99 return



If you fancy enjoying your own itinerary whilst in France, then take advantage of our great value return sailing offer available on our high-speed services to Caen or Cherbourg.

Head for the coastal resorts of Dinard, Deauville or Honfleur, or visit the historic sights of Bayeux. Or how about exploring the Normandy countryside and D-Day beaches? All are within an easy drive.

- Take your car and enjoy up to 2 days away
- Speed across to Caen or Cherbourg with many departures arriving in time for lunch
- Mix and match these services to plan your ideal itinerary
- Travel until 4 July 2012

Price based on 2 travelling in a standard car. Exclusions apply. Book by 22 May 2012.

Visit brittanyferries.com/portsmouth or call 0871 244 1495

Brittany Ferries
where holidays begin

Calls cost 10p per minute plus network extras. All offers are for new bookings only, subject to availability. Conditions and exclusions apply. See website for full details and valid travel dates.

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Baird to miss final

NEITHER Eastleigh nor AFC Totton will have their usual names at the helm for Wednesday's Hampshire FA Senior Cup final at St Mary's (7.30pm).

After leading AFC Totton to glory in the last two seasons, Stuart Ritchie would have been gunning for an impressive hat-trick of county crowns.

But having completed the Evo-Stik Southern Premier Division season with the Stags, Ritchie was unveiled as new manager of Havant & Waterlooville on Tuesday

and won't be there to defend the trophy.

Eastleigh boss Ian Baird, pictured above, will also be absent, having accepted an invitation to the Hong Kong FC International

Soccer Sevens.

Baird, who managed the Hong Kong national team in 1999, annually attends the event and had not anticipated Eastleigh being in the HSC final when they were knocked out at the second round stage by Aldershot in October.

But the Spitfires were reinstated at the expense of the Shots, who fielded an ineligible player, and went on to beat Fleet Town, Romsey Town and Winchester City to reach the showpiece finale.

Baird, whose right-hand man Shaun Wilkinson will take the team, admitted: "I'm sorry to miss the final. It's always nice to play at St Mary's on a lovely pitch."

"But unfortunately I committed to Hong Kong after we'd been knocked out at Aldershot."

With Ritchie's assistant Sean New following him to Havant and Totton yet to appoint a new boss, the Stags have entrusted reserve team manager Jim Thorne with the job of leading them out at St Mary's.

He will be assisted by ex-Eastleigh defender Ross Bottomley who is cup-tied having played for the Spitfires in earlier rounds.

Downton in good Nic

DOWNTON capped an excellent season by winning the Salisbury Hospital Cup.

Just 48 hours after booking their place in the final with a 2-0 defeat of Bemerton Heath Harlequins at Western Way, courtesy of Declan McGregor and Vince Rusher, the Robins saw off neighbours Laverstock & Ford 4-0 to lift the trophy.

Ex-Lavvy man Danny Urry and Nic Turpin sent them in two up at half-time at Salisbury City's Raymond McEnhill Stadium.

Defender Ben Smith quickly made it 3-0 at the start of the second half and Turpin added the fourth. It was Turpin's 30th goal of a memorable campaign which saw Downton secure a top-six finish on their return to the Sydenhams Wessex top flight.

Robins skipper Josh Thomas lifted the trophy on his return to his old Salisbury City stamping ground.

It was the third time in four years that Jeff Softley's men had won the competition which has raised more than £37,000 for hospital charities.

Downton, meanwhile, are finalising plans for their pre-season schedule.

Any clubs interested in arranging a friendly against Jeff Softley's Robins – either home or away – are invited to contact secretary Mike Turner on 01980 629676 or 07903 376231 or email him at mike.turner@sport4salisbury.com.



CUP WINNER: Nic Turpin, left, netted twice for Downton in the final of the Salisbury Hospital Cup.



DAVE LEWIS

NEW GE Hamble co-manager Dave Lewis is looking forward to building on the legacy left by his friend and business partner Danny Bowers.

With Bowers moving upstairs to the role of director of football, former first-team coach Lewis is relishing the prospect of working alongside club stalwart Paul Cotton and, hopefully, bettering this season's best-ever fifth-placed finish in the Sydenhams Premier Division.

"What Danny has achieved is incredible. He's raised the club's profile on and off the pitch," said Lewis.

"He's given Hamble that bit of kudos they deserve with all sorts of club records set – our highest ever league finish this season and our furthest runs in the FA Cup and Vase last season. There's been one high after another.

"We haven't lost Danny. He'll still be around to offer his experience.

"He's taken the title of director of football and, although he will have nothing to do with matchdays, he will still be here to support me and Paul if we need him."

The initial indications are that Lewis and Cotton will have minimal

Wendy Gee

wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk

NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

building work to do this summer.

Barring one or two players who are still making up their minds, the bulk of the squad have agreed in principle to stay at Follands Park.

Hopefully it will leave the new co-management pairing with just a bit of fine-tuning to do for 2012/13.

"We're looking to make two or three signings, but I don't believe there are any weak areas and those who come in will have to be really good players with the right character," said Lewis.

"Danny's gone on record as saying we should have done better than we did this season, but the table doesn't lie and you end up where you deserve to be.

"Where you finish is not down to referees, injuries or whatever. The message I always send to the players is that the answer lies within the dressing room walls.

"I picked Bemerton to win the league this season and, with Winchester going up, I think they're favourites for next season. I can't see

past them for the title.

"But I believe that if we keep this group together at Hamble, there's no reason we shouldn't be up there challenging.

"We've got a fantastic squad of players and we've been lucky that when we've asked them to do things, they've trusted us enough to carry that out on the pitch.

"It's a privilege to have coached them and to now get the opportunity to manage alongside Paul."

Cotton's loyalty to the club has earned him the nickname 'Mr Hamble' and he was one of the main reasons Lewis – a former Planemakers player – returned with Bowers three years ago after the club had been relegated to Sydenhams One.

"Whatever Paul says people listen to. His opinion is always very telling and poignant," said Lewis. "He doesn't need to shout or bawl, his demeanour demands respect.

"I played

against Hamble for Andover when they'd been relegated and we beat them something like 7-0 or 8-0. I should have been happy, but I felt hurt for the club and when I went back there for the interview with Danny three years ago it re-alerted me to my feelings for Hamble.

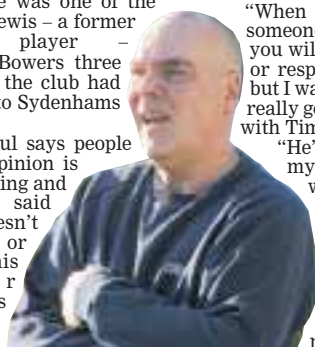
"I said to Paul then that I'd like to help in any way I could and it turned out to be a coaching job."

Lewis was new to coaching at the time and it was another loyal Hamble servant, fellow coach Tim Middleton, who helped him find his feet.

"When you work closely with someone new, you don't know if you will get on with that person or respect their football ethics, but I was lucky enough to have a really good working relationship with Tim," he said.

"He's been fantastic. It was my first coaching job and it was new for me to be looking after 15 or 20 players, but Tim had already done it which made it easier for me.

"Tim is as important as any one of the players at Hamble. He's a key member of the group."



TURN TO PAGES 22-23 FOR JUNIOR FOOTBALL

Non-league Football

BAIRD GETS HIS MAN

Sanfoka is second in at the Silverlake

Wendy Gee

wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk

NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

EASTLEIGH have secured their second summer signing, bringing in defender Osei Sankofa from Blue Square Bet South rivals Boreham Wood.

The 27-year-old former Charlton Athletic player has agreed personal terms and joins the Spitfires on an initial one-year deal.

Manager Ian Baird said: "Osei fits the profile of the player we are looking to attract."

"He is young, strong, athletic and had a really good season last year at Boreham Wood."

Pedigree

"I have kept tabs on him for some time."

"He is a player with a good pedigree and I'm pleased to have secured his signature. We are trying to get a good blend of experience and youth and create a really good environment next year where players are judged on merits and form."

Six-footer Sankofa, who can play anywhere across the back line, has represented England from under-16 through to under-20 level.

The Streatham-born player made his first-team debut for Charlton in a 4-1 defeat to Manchester United in 2002/03 and went on to make 15 first-team appearances for the club.

He had loan spells with Bristol City and Brentford before moving to Southend United in 2008 where he linked up with Eastleigh's Damian Scannell.

From there he dropped into non-League with Farnborough and, together with Daryl McMahon and Bradley Bubb, was a member of their BSB South runners-up side of 2010/11.

Woking winger Dale Binns has meanwhile blast-



Old boy out to stop Eastleigh

EASTLEIGH could come face to face with their former goalkeeper Jason Matthews next season.

The 37-year-old has returned to the Blue Square Bet South as the first summer signing of the Spitfires' south coast rivals Dorchester Town.

Matthews, pictured, has arrived at the Avenue Stadium on a one-year deal from Bath City, becoming Phil Simkin's first capture as permanent Magpies boss.

With last season's first-choice stopper, Alan Walker-Harris, currently sidelined with a broken leg, he is expected to assume the No1 jersey.

"Although I've not worked with Jason before, I have known him for a while," said Simkin.

"Those who have worked with him don't have a bad word to say about him."

"He has years of experience, he will be tremendous in the dressing room and can be a big asset to the club."

Paulton-born Matthews was among a large batch of senior players released by Eastleigh last May, having initially joined the Spitfires from Weymouth in March 2008.

Last November he had looked set to leave Bath and rejoin one of his former clubs, Salisbury City, but he had a change of heart.

Simkin has denied that Matthews' arrival will signal the end of Walker-Harris's Dorchester career.

"No one, not even Alan, knows how long it will take him to heal, recover and get fit again," he said.

"He has nothing to worry about as far as his job at the club is concerned."

Walker-Harris, who includes Eastleigh, Bashley and Winchester City among his former clubs, was recently crowned Dorchester's supporters' player and on-line player-of-the-year.

He said: "Phil has done well to get Jason. It was something he had to do really as he couldn't wait for me."

Simkin has appointed Stuart Heath, former boss of ex-Wessex outfit Portland United, as his new assistant. Heath will fill the void left by Gary Borthwick, who has work commitments.

ed Eastleigh for claiming they had signed him.

Binns's 'move' to the Silverlake Stadium briefly appeared on the Spitfires website before being hastily withdrawn.

Binns, another member of the play-off making Farnborough side of

2010/11, angrily accused Eastleigh of "disrespect" for running the story while he was still under contract with Woking.

'Out of order'

Speaking after scoring in

Woking's Surrey Senior Cup triumph over Sutton on Tuesday, he said: "I have spoken to their (Eastleigh's) manager and assistant and told them 'it's bang out of order, I haven't signed anything with you'."

Baird, though, remained

hopeful of tying up a deal with Binns this weekend and even the player himself admitted: "It's a possibility I may sign for Eastleigh, but I haven't decided. All I was doing was keeping my options open like anyone would."

Non-league News

City Conference call
AFC Totton's play-off conquerors Oxford City must wait until May 25 to find out which division of the Blue Square Bet Conference they will play in next season.

Ideally they would like to join the likes of Eastleigh, Salisbury and ex-Totton boss Stuart Ritchie's Havant & Waterlooville in the Blue Square Bet South.

But although the issue is due to be discussed at the FA Alliance sub-committee meeting this Tuesday (May 15), it will not be rubber-stamped until the following week.

City chairman Brian Cox said: "Hopefully we are going to be in the Blue Square Bet South rather than the North."

"Even then, there is a fair amount of travelling. There are pluses and minuses (to going up) - obviously you get a lot better gates, but then you've got the costs of the travelling against it."

Oxford team boss Mike Ford, meanwhile, hailed his side's achievement as "magnificent" after beating Totton 4-2 in Monday's Evo-Stik Southern Premier play-off final at a wet and muddy Court Place Farm. He admitted: "In the first half we were awful, but still we went in at the break 1-0 up. They got a goal back and then we responded with three."

"It will really sink in when the fixtures come out."

Salisbury youth trials
SALISBURY City are holding youth trials later this month.

The trials, for six to 16-year-olds, will take place on Tuesday, May 22 and Thursday, May 24 from 6-8pm. Salisbury's newly re-launched youth section is being overseen by head of youth development Mike Cooper. The aim is to offer boys and girls a football development pathway from under-six up to adult football.

Robson steps up
FORMER Bashley and Gosport Borough midfielder Darren Robson is taking over as manager of Puma Engineering Hampshire Premier League outfit Paulsgrove.

Robson steps up from the role of first-team coach to replace Ian Heather who retired after Monday's 2-1 defeat by champions Liphook United in the PEHPL Cup final at Petersfield.

MORE NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL ON PAGES 16-21

Non-league Football



RITCHIE: MY PRIDE AT TOTTON TURNAROUND



Wendy Gee

wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk

NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

DURING eight extraordinary years in charge of AFC Totton, Stuart Ritchie experienced the highs of an FA Vase final at Wembley and a live televised FA Cup second round tie against Bristol Rovers.

Throw in the Wessex League and Southern One South & West championships and back-to-back Hampshire FA Senior Cup final successes over Aldershot and Sholing and there is much to be proud of for a man who was a rookie manager when he was first appointed in 2004.

Yet ask the 43-year-old, main picture, his greatest achievement with the Stags and the newly installed Havant & Waterlooville boss will point at the long list of applicants vying to succeed him at the Testwood Stadium helm.

At the last count acting chairman Paul Wallace confirmed there were upwards of 20 candidates in contention for the post, with respected local names like Barry Blankley, Alex Pike, Steve Riley, James Taylor, Graham Kemp, John Robson, Shaun Gale and ex-Saint Nick Holmes being bandied around.

It's in stark contrast to eight years ago when Totton were in dire straits and the then chairman Richie Maton took a chance on Millbrook-based Ritchie, a former Aston Villa and Crewe midfielder who was in the process of hanging up his boots.

"What's my biggest achievement at Totton? I'd say it was turning a job that no one wanted to apply for into one that's



CUP RUN: Totton celebrate their FA Cup first-round victory over Bradford Park Avenue with manager Stuart Ritchie at the end of the game.

getting a load of applicants," said Ritchie.

"When I took the job on, no one really wanted it, but now there are lots of decent names going for it.

"That's a sign of where the club is at the moment."

Given the time and hard work he and others devoted to transforming Totton from Wessex League also-rans to Southern

Premier promotion contenders, it was no easy decision for Ritchie to leave.

"I've had some truly fantastic years at Totton," he said.

"It wasn't a very good club when I took over. It wasn't going anywhere.

"But we all worked really hard to push it on and make Totton what it is today.

"It was a bit of a rollercoaster

and the success we had was all down to hard work and sacrifices

"It was tough getting players in that we wanted and then battling to keep those players at the club.

"But it was an amazing eight years at Totton and I wouldn't change it for the world.

"The FA Vase and FA Cup are stand-out memories and the club should be proud of itself for what it's achieved."

Ritchie's hope now is that Totton will find the right managerial successor and keep progressing at their own pace on and off the pitch.

"It's up to Totton what they do next, but I just hope they keep going forward rather than backwards," he said.

"Do they want to stay where they are or try and push it on?

"If it's the latter, they need to bring in a winner who wants to achieve.

"The tools are all there for the new manager and the team is good.

"It's all set up to keep achieving and they need a strong character to push them on."

Totton have experienced their share of behind-the-scenes turbulence this season with two chairmen, Phil Shephard and Sean Whelan, leaving either side of main sponsor Jim Fallon's controversial departure. But Ritchie went with no hard feelings.

"They're all good people and I didn't leave under a cloud. There was no bad feeling between me and anyone at the club," he said.

"But I needed a break and a chance to go elsewhere if the opportunity came up.

"The players wished me all the best and so did the committee and I wish Totton all the luck in the world.

"It's a family club full of decent people and now it's got to decide where it wants to be.

"Do they want to seriously push on or just have a little go here and there?

"Totton have got to be realistic. The club's hardly got any debts and they're in a good position.

"They've had a bit of success and now they need to look at where they want to go and what they want to do.

"Maybe it's time for them to stand still a bit, I don't know.

"But, for me, I needed another challenge, something else to look forward to."

What a difference eight years makes ...

● The following was posted by Calmore Stag on the AFC Totton website messageboard

"THE club is nigh on unrecognisable from the club Stu and Sean took over in the summer of 2004. When they took over the reins at Testwood Park, the entire first team had left after the departure of the previous manager Barry Blankley. Many of them joined former Stags boss Ian Robinson at Lymington & New Milton.

Richie Maton, the AFC Totton chairman at the time, asked Stu and Sean to take over the first-team management.

They agreed - but only on a temporary basis.

Stu and Sean weren't totally sure they even wanted to take charge at the time. It wasn't only the fact that the first team had upped and left that made them reluctant to take over. They had no money to rebuild the team, no budget for wages, the stadium needed some TLC and the dressing rooms were just about larger than the average garden shed.

The average home gate in their first year in charge was 62, including a truly paltry crowd of 16 (yes SIXTEEN) versus Christchurch.

Anybody who watched the Stags at the time would probably agree that the Southern League was a million miles away.

The club seemed content to drift along in the Wessex League and not push on and show any ambition.

Sean and Stu's reluctance to take over probably had more to do with this than anything else."

EMAIL NON-LEAGUE STORIES TO wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk

Non-league Football

Stu: Swans boss is the benchmark

STUART Ritchie sees Swansea City boss Brendan Rodgers as the benchmark for all aspiring young football managers.

When Ritchie left AFC Totton for Havant & Waterlooville this week, it marked the next step in a dramatic rise up the non-League managerial ladder for the 43-year-old former Aston Villa and Crewe midfielder.

After being appointed Totton boss in 2004, he embarked on a magical journey which lifted the Stags from Wessex League also-rans to Southern Premier promotion contenders in the space of just eight years.

And though Totton's quest to move up yet another level fell just short with a 4-2 Evo-Stik Premier play-off final defeat at Oxford City on Monday, Ritchie has himself achieved his dream of Conference South football.

His amazing record of improving Totton's league position season on season caught the eye of his old club Havant & Waterlooville who unveiled him, along with assistant Sean New, as their new management team on Tuesday.

Back in his playing days with Newport IoW, Ritchie's teammates included Swans boss Rodgers, pictured below, whose rise up the football pyramid has been even more spectacular.

A former Reading youth player, the Northern Irishman's professional career was cut short by a knee injury at the age of 20 before he had even made a League appearance for the Royals.

Realising he was not going to make it, he went off to play non-League football for Newport IoW, then managed by Steve Mellor.

But Rodgers stayed on at Reading as youth team coach, joined Chelsea as youth team manager during Jose Mourinho's time in charge before being promoted to run the reserve team at Stamford Bridge.

That led to his appointment as Watford boss two years later and, after returning to replace Steve Coppell at Reading, he took over at Swansea City where he has been hailed as a "miracle worker" for leading the Welsh club into the Premier League – and, more remarkably, keeping them there.

Asked his own ambitions in the game, Ritchie said: "Brendan Rodgers is the benchmark."

"He was a good youth player and he got his coaching badges, but he never played senior football at any level."

"It's a new breed of manager now and everyone is working hard to achieve things. I don't get carried away with my ambitions, but any club I go to I want to do well. That's what I push myself to do."

"There's no point going to a club to stagnate."

"You've got to force yourself forward and make the team as good as you can."

Ritchie, who has signed a two-year contract for the Hawks, is no stranger to Westleigh Park.

He played an integral role in the newly-merged Hawks side that won the Southern League Southern Division title at the first attempt in 1999.



PLAYER OF THE YEAR:
Carl Pettefer.

Pettefer wins fans' vote

INSPIRATIONAL skipper Carl Pettefer bagged more than half the votes in the AFC Totton supporters' player-of-the-year poll.

The 31-year-old former Portsmouth, Southend and Oxford United midfielder got 52 per cent of the votes, leaving star winger Mike Gosney in second place with 16 per cent and pacy striker Nathaniel Sherborne in third with 14 per cent.

Unfortunately for Pettefer, a sparkling season was not rounded off with the ultimate prize of promotion.

Despite another classy display in the midfield engine room at Oxford City on Monday, his dreams of Blue Square Bet South football were shattered by a 4-2 defeat in the Evo-Stik Premier Division play-off final.

It was no mean feat for Totton to get that far in their first season as a top-flight Southern

League club, having finished third in the table – three points and one place below runners-up Oxford.

But Pettefer, who was up against two of his former Oxford United teammates in ex-Saint Steve Basham and Chris Wilmott in Monday's rain-soaked showdown, admitted afterwards: "We'd have taken what we've achieved at the start of the season, but I'm gutted because this was a winnable game."

"I thought we dominated the first half and we played well enough in the second half."

"The pitch didn't help, but it was the same for them and we still knocked it about quite well at times."

"A few people said the build-up to Oxford's second goal (a Basham penalty) was offside, but we should have dealt with it anyway. And how there wasn't a free kick given before their

last goal, for a foul against me, I've no idea."

Despite Monday's result, Pettefer has no regrets about signing for Totton just over three seasons ago.

The pedigree performer, who helped Southend win the League Two play-off final at the Millennium Stadium in 2005, says that signing for the Stags gave him a new lease of life.

"I came to Totton from Bognor who were down at the bottom of the table and in a bit of a mess. It wasn't a great time for me," he said.

"But since coming here, I've really enjoyed my football."

Pettefer could still lift some silverware at St Mary's on Wednesday (May 16, 7.30pm) when Totton will be gunning for a hat-trick of Hampshire FA Senior Cup successes, this time against Blue Square Bet South neighbours Eastleigh.

BROWN-ED OFF!

Stefan goes from Wembley delight to play-off woe

IT LOOKED like being the perfect bank holiday weekend for Stefan Brown when he stabbed AFC Totton level in Monday's Evo-Stik Premier Division play-off final at Oxford City.

But alas for the 22-year-old, there was a nasty sting in the tail as Oxford hit back with a three-goal blitz to wreck the Stags' chances of promotion to the Blue Square Bet South, **writes WENDY GEE.**

The weekend had started so well for Brown with a VIP trip to Wembley for the FA Cup final.

It was his reward for being voted player-of-the-round for his performance against Bradford Park Avenue six months ago when he bagged a record-breaking hat-trick as a substitute in Totton's 8-1 first round win.

"I had a great time at Wembley," smiled Brown, who is about to move back to his home town of Reading after graduating from Portsmouth University.

"I took my dad, Howard, along as my guest and he was very happy with the result being a Chelsea fan!"

"I'm an Arsenal fan, but it was a really good day out. I didn't get on the pitch, the presentations were all done inside the stadium. I got presented with my award by Sir Trevor Brooking."

"Claudio Ranieri, Peter Reid and Dennis Wise were all there and I was sat next to Sam Allardyce at my table."

Having rubbed shoulders some of English football's finest, Brown had hoped to be mixing with superior company on the pitch next season.

But Totton's hopes of joining Eastleigh in the Conference South were torn apart in controversial circumstances at Oxford, where



LEVELLER: Stefan Brown, second left, celebrates equalising against Oxford City on Monday.

they lost 4-2.

"I felt we were on top for most of the game, but decisions went against us," he said.

"For their second goal (ex-Saint Steve Basham's penalty) our lads were really annoyed because we all felt their player was offside as he went through. It was handball by Jamie Whiskin, but it was the previous phase we had the problem with."

"We can count the other two Oxford goals away because we were attacking – it was the second one that killed us."

"But that's how cruel football is. The best team doesn't always win."

"It's a real shame because it would have been the perfect end to a really good season."

While there is already talk circulating that some Totton players will follow departed boss Stuart Ritchie to his new club Havant & Waterlooville, Brown won't be one of them.

"I'm already signed on next year with Totton," he said.

"We'll all miss Stu. He's done a lot for the club and for me personally, but I can't blame him if he wants to challenge himself elsewhere."

"I feel like he's helped me a lot since I signed for Totton from Thatcham. He worked with us all

individually when he needed to."

"I don't begrudge him this chance to take on a new challenge and hopefully we can carry on where Stu left off."

"Right now it's hard to see the positives, but when you look back over the whole season, we've achieved so much."

"And we've got the Hampshire Senior Cup final to come yet, so who knows, we could still end the season on a high."

"The dressing room atmosphere's not great right now (straight after the Oxford defeat), but I'm sure we'll pick ourselves up and hopefully go again."

TURN TO NEXT PAGE FOR MORE NON-LEAGUE

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Go-ahead for Groves
BRENDON King and ex-Eastleigh striker Matt Groves, below, have been given the green light to take Weymouth into next season.

Following a meeting of the Terras' interim board, it was announced that the duo had been given new contracts by the Evo-Stik Southern Premier outfit.

A club statement said: "The board are very happy with the performance of our young manager and his training team and this hopefully sends out a sign to all our loyal fans that stability, passion and ambition have returned to the Bob Lucas Stadium."

"We now look forward to very soon announcing some exciting new signings and equally exciting pre-season friendlies."

King, who just about kept the Terras afloat in 17th place, said: "Instead of looking over our shoulders like we have done over the last few years, we want to be comfortably looking up next season."

"I am not saying play-offs or winning the league. Our aim is to start building a side with a view to pushing on over the next two or three years."

Tanner is vote winner
MIDFIELDER Callum Tanner scooped both the players' player and manager's player-of-the-year awards for Sydenhams Premier Division survivors New Milton Town. Tanner, below, briefly signed for Blackfield & Langley



from Romsey Town last summer, but he didn't get a look-in at Gang Warily. He signed for the Linnets last September, following former

Romsey boss and Blackfield assistant manager Glenn Burnett to Fawcett's Field, and impressed with a string of top-notch performances.

On-loan Havant & Waterlooville striker Alex Baldacchino collected the Linnets' golden boot award.

STREET TURN TO ANDREWS

Former Brighton striker takes reins at north Hampshire club

ANDOVER New Street are pinning their hopes on ex-Brighton, Bashley and Andover striker Phil Andrews to build on this season's highest ever finish of eighth in Sydenhams One.

Along with Trevor Knight, Andrews has been tasked with managing the north Hampshire club after Brian Drury stood down for personal reasons.

Andrews and Knight, who have been coaching at Street this season, will be supported by experienced player Stuart Anderson.

It appears New Street will aim to assemble a more local team – something many thought might have happened last July when Southern League neighbours Andover FC went under.

Thanking the out-going manager for all his hard work, New Street chairman Martin Tobin said Drury had "brought the club back into the fold and would always be welcome at Foxcote Park."

There were suggestions in the local press that Andover forfeited their last game of the season away to Division One runners-up AFC Portchester because Drury had left, taking several players with him.

Portchester were not best pleased because it denied them the chance to celebrate their forthcoming promotion in front of their home fans.

But, writing in The Pink's sister paper The Andover

Advertiser, Drury explained: "After what was a very difficult season for me having achieved so much in such a short space of time, I was extremely sad to have to walk away from what was a genuine work in progress."

"Plans were in place to take the club forward next season with the introduction of the type of player that was missing this season."

"With regret I had to let the chairman know that I would be unavailable for the final game of the season and, for personal reasons, I would be resigning as manager."

"In football it is not unusual for a club and manager to advise the press that the parting is by mutual consent and people outside of that agreement make assumptions which are not necessarily correct."

"To report that the final game was called off because I left and took half the team with me is one such incorrect assumption."

"I was not available, my assistant was not available, my other coach normally finds it difficult to make Saturday away games because of family commitments and the club physio was ill."

"I am not aware of any club statement to suggest I was to blame for the cancellation of the final game."

Wishing Andrews, Knight and Anderson all the best for the future, Drury added: "I genuinely hope the new regime can build on this season's hard work."



PEDIGREE:
Phil Andrews celebrates a goal during his time with Andover FC.

Play-off run boosts Bristow belief

BASINGSTOKE Town boss Jason Bristow took several positives from his side's Blue Square Bet South play-off semi-final defeat by Dartford.

The Dragons lost 1-0 at the Camrose before going down 2-1 in the second leg in Kent last Sunday.

But the 3-1 aggregate scoreline only told part of the story.

Town dominated the second half of the first leg and would have ended the game on level terms had ex-Eastleigh winger Shaun McAuley been able to find the net from close range.

Bristow's men also enjoyed plenty of possession in the second leg, only to fall behind when an enforced substitution left them disorganised at a set-piece.

McAuley got them back into the tie

with a brilliant strike, but Dartford restored their two-goal cushion in controversial fashion – Town claiming handball before Luke Wilkinson bundled the ball in.

More bad luck followed when Delano Sam-Yorke was denied a goal by a very tight offside decision and then Jay Gasson hit the crossbar and Jide Ogunbode just failed to turn in the rebound from close range. "There are all sorts of ifs and buts, but that's football," said Bristow.

"They were two exceptional performances and that was the most important thing."

"We have done ourselves justice in the way we played."

"We gave it a real go and Dartford know they have been in a game."

"I think that everyone outside of our club expected them to beat us comfortably, but that was not the case and we pushed them to the end."

"We showed we can compete because Dartford are a very strong side. For long periods of the tie we dealt with them."

"We are disappointed that the season has finished. With the atmosphere around the club, the support we have had and the way we have been playing, we would have been happy to go another ten games."

The play-off semi-finals also brought disappointment for former Eastleigh boss Paul Doswell, whose Sutton United side failed to overturn a 2-1 first-leg deficit at Welling United last Sunday.

The Us did everything asked of them

in a goalless second leg – except score.

"I hope the supporters enjoyed it and I hope they're not too disappointed because I think this is a great league we're in and, when we go up, I want us to be ready to go up, and that's more to do with the team," said Compton-based Doswell.

"It will need to be a younger team that earns a lot less money than other players because we can't afford to do it any other way."

"There is a project in place and we're looking forward to it. It may take three years, four years or five years, but we'll get there."

"We went to Welling confident we could do well and get a result and, for a side that's only been beaten once at home this year, I thought we gave them the run-around."

Non-league Football

More than 200 years of service to football

FOUR members of Stockbridge FC have received North Hants FA Service to Football awards.

Mavis Savage, Peter Savage, Trevor Dance and Michael Bailey (pictured left to right) – who, between them, have devoted an amazing 202 years to the game – were honoured at the Sydenhams One club's disco and social evening at the Grosvenor Hotel, Stockbridge.

Presenting the awards were North Hants FA chairman Keith Wyatt and honorary secretary Alan Blackman.

"This shows tremendous commitment and is much appreciated by everyone at the club," said Stockbridge's Dave Webb.



BANK ON PRIORY TO BE IN TITLE MIX – OSBORNE



CUP DOUBLE:
Christchurch
striker Ben
Osborne.

TWO-GOAL hero Ben Osborne believes Christchurch can build on Monday's Sydenhams Wessex League Cup triumph by mounting a serious title charge next season.

The Priory striker netted two vital late goals as the Hurn Bridge outfit claimed the silverware with a 3-1 victory over Division One underdogs Brockenhurst at Bemerton's Western Way HQ.

It capped a fine campaign for Graham Kemp's men after they had already registered a club record points total to finish third in the Premier Division.

It also made amends for the disappointment of losing out to Bemerton in the Russell Cotes Cup final.

Bank manager Osborne was a key player during a memorable season for Priory, scoring 22 league goals and 32 in all competitions.

And the 30-year-old is confident that further success could be within the club's reach next term.

He said: "We started out the season looking to try to win something so we certainly achieved that.

"If someone had said to us we would achieve the best ever points total and league position, get to two cup finals and win one of them, with the League Cup probably being a priority out of the two, we'd have taken it. It has been a really good season.

"The level of consistency has been there over the past few years so we will just push on for next year and, hopefully, aim for the league.

"You have always got to try to stretch yourself. There will be other teams up there competing, but I think we have got as good a chance as anyone.

"We slipped up and gave away points during the season, which cost us. If you look back at where we lost points, we could easily have achieved a lot more."



WINNERS: Christchurch captain Dan Crutchley lifts the Sydenhams Wessex League Cup.

Picture by John Wright

Osborne is hopeful that Christchurch will be able to retain their leading players despite not being able to offer them financial rewards.

He said: "If you look at the team we had on Monday, the majority have given an

indication they are going to stay, so I think Kempy is quite optimistic we can keep most of them.

"I don't think any of them will be looking to go to other Wessex League clubs. If anything, they will be going higher, which is a credit to them anyway, so there is no issue there."

Osborne added: "I was chuffed to bits to score 32 goals this season.

"I had a bad start, injuring my head, and had a month off with my wedding as well.

"I came back firing. Another injury in February/March time slowed me down, but I finished strongly which was good.

"It has been a good season all round."

Sam Griffin rifled home at the far post to hand Christchurch a 23rd-minute lead in Monday's final, but Brockenhurst pegged them back with Warren Kenna's audacious 30-yard lob four minutes after the interval.

Priory were ruffled for a while, but they survived the onslaught and scored against the run of play on 76 minutes when Osborne collected Mark Smith's precision pass and rounded keeper Scott O'Rourke.

It was all Christchurch from there with Russell Cook twice denied by spectacular blocks before Osborne converted again in injury time.

"We have played loads better than that this season, but this was a final and it was all about getting across the line," said Kemp.

Asked whether Christchurch could push for next season's Wessex title, the Priory boss said: "I don't see why not, as long as our best players aren't picked off by higher clubs.

"Money is always a problem for this football club and anyone worth their salt will be looking at some of our players. But we're looking at building on team loyalty."

EMAIL TEAM PICTURES TO echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

Non-league Football

Non-league News



DARRELL CLARKE

Clarke: my regret over Williams exit

SALISBURY City boss Darrell Clarke regrets the loss of striker Marvin Williams to Blue Square Bet South rivals Eastleigh.

The 24-year-old joined the Whites mid-season from Hemel Hempstead Town, who were managed at the time by ex-Whites manager Tommy Widdrington.

Having played for Millwall, Yeovil, Brentford and Torquay United earlier in his career, Williams was looking for a path back into full-time football after making seven appearances for Swedish third division side Ostergunds FK in 2010.

Prior to joining Hemel Hempstead early last year, an offer from Spanish side CF Gandia fell through at the 11th hour.

"I'm disappointed to be losing Marvin," said Clarke.

"When he joined us from Hemel Hempstead we helped get his career back on track and he helped us with some great performances.

"But we understand that Eastleigh offered him a great deal – and that's football.

"We wish him all the best for the future and thank him for his contributions while with the club."

The good news for the Whites is that goalkeeper Will Puddy will be part of Clarke's squad next season as they bid to build on a tenth-placed finish in the Conference South.

Puddy, who has proved a highly dependable performer since joining City from Chippenham Town in January, has signed a new deal.

"I'm delighted that Will has agreed his deal," said Clarke. "He's made a great impact, especially towards the end of the season, and he's established himself as a top keeper."

"In the 12 starts he made for us he was only on losing side once."

"I'm looking forward to working with him next season."

Defender Luke Ruddick, meanwhile, will be back with Whites in pre-season on non-contract terms – hopefully fully fit and firing.

"Luke has had a lot of injury problems recently with a previous heart virus and on-going hamstring issues," said Clarke.

"He's off to Holland in the summer to see a top hamstring specialist to get sorted out once and for all and he'll be looking to earn himself a new deal in pre-season."

PIKE COMMITS

... BUT DOES ADMIT TOTTON POST WAS A TEMPTER

Simon Walter

simon.walter@dailyecho.co.uk

GOSPORT Borough manager Alex Pike has committed his future to his hometown club after winning promotion to the Evo-Stik Southern Premier.

Pike admitted he was interested in the vacancy at AFC Totton before securing a second promotion in seven years that means Gosport will be in the same division as the Stags again next season.

He said: "AFC Totton is a superb football club and had we not got promoted I might well have been interested."

"There is no doubt in my mind I'd have struggled to keep some of our players had we not gone up."

"But my assistant Mick Catlin and I have now signed two-year contracts and so has Justin Bennett, with an option for another year, so the club has continuity."

Pike led Wimborne Town to the FA Vase at Wembley in 1992, but admits Gosport's 3-1 play-off final win at Poole Town on Bank Holiday Monday eclipses that achievement.

"When I took over we were mid-table in the Wessex League, it's the first time I've been involved in something like this," he says.

"The prize is so huge it has to go down as my best achievement. My teams seem to do well when the year ends in a '2'!"

"But the FA Vase is a cup – this is taking the club to the next level."

"I have to thank the two chairmen I've worked with at Privett Park, John Simpson and Mark Hook."

"I was just a Wessex League manager when I came to the club and now I'm a Southern Premier manager for the first time."

"We have a five-year game plan to get into the Conference South and we are two years ahead of schedule."

Gosport are back in the Southern Premier for the first time since 1991 and Pike, pictured right, is confident of another promotion charge next year.

"Promoted clubs like Totton have done well in their first season in the Southern Premier which shows how strong the South & West division is."

"We've got the infrastructure and



good sponsors that want to come on board. But we also have to be realistic.

"I respect clubs like Eastleigh and Havant & Waterlooville but even they have found it takes a lot of money to do well in Conference South, never mind going to the Conference itself."

"But for the last few years we've been under budget and this season we've only been very slightly over budget."

"Some managers spend a lot of money to get clubs promoted and leave them in a lot of trouble but we've lived within our means."



Former Andover, Eastleigh and AFC Totton striker Bennett has been crucial to Gosport's success, while Steve Claridge's goals at Poole – which included the 90th minute equaliser that took the game to extra time – were priceless.

Claridge, 46, insists he has now retired, but there are plenty of goals left in 29-year-old Bennett, whose stunning overhead

kick against Sholing booked Gosport place in the final.

Pike continued: "Maybe Justin can play for another 17 years!"

"There's no doubt in my mind that he can play one or two levels higher than he's got that natural instinct you can't coach."

"And no one can underestimate what Steve has done for the club. He's brought a degree of professionalism and calmness."

"He's scored winning goals at Wembley in a play-off final and League Cup final so he was fantastic to have coming off the bench this week."

"When we played against Poole earlier in the season he was negated [defender] Michael Walker, but for

NON-LEAGUE STORY TO TELL? CALL WENDY GEE ON 023

Non-league Football

TO GOSPORT ...

Non-league News

Boatmen have plenty in reserve!

MANAGER Dave Fear and coach Gavin Dobson have presided over 270 competitive games in charge of Sholing's reserves – and they never tire of lifting silverware.

Not content with winning the inaugural Wyvern Combination League Premier Division title, the Boatmen's second-string made it a double by seeing off AFC Portchester 6-0 in the Wyvern Challenge Cup final at Moneyfields.

It was their tenth cup final win out of ten in the last six years and their second league/cup double in as many seasons, having ruled the Wessex roost last term.

From the moment Rob Flooks smashed in Alex Sawyer's shot after it had rebounded off the post in the 12th minute, there was no looking back for Sholing at Moneyfields as Dan Miller, Ryan Lambert, Jack McCarthy, Flooks and Dan Mason completed a handsome win.

Mason's goal established him as the Wyvern's joint top scorer in league and cup and, but for being denied by a late penalty save, he would have topped the list outright.

"It's been a very good season and we have built our squad ready for next season," said Fear.

"We have one player over 21 and there were four under-18s playing in the cup final."

During Fear and Dobson's six years at the helm, Sholing's reserves have won an impressive four league titles, three Southampton Senior Cups and three league cups.

A massive 220 games have been won, 23 drawn and 27 lost.

But the most impressive statistic of all is that they are perennial kings of the fair play league, having won the award five times with just nine players red-carded in six years.

"To stay at the top with such a young side is a lot of hard work," said Fear. "But at Sholing our under-16s are as important as our under-18s and the proof is that in our reserve squad of 18 players, all but one has come through the youth system."

"The first team squad regularly has seven ex-reserves playing in it."

"Sholing is several teams in one club!"

Steve's happy ending

STEVE Claridge is delighted to have ended his playing career on a high – at the age of 46.

The former Pompey striker's two goals in last Monday's Evostik Southern South & West play-off final ensured a dramatic 3-1 win at favourites Poole Town.

Claridge memorably scored winning goals in play-off and League Cup finals at Wembley, for Leicester City in the mid-1990s.

But his brace at Poole was the perfect way to go out.

He said: "I came back for days like last Monday and have always said goals are important from the bottom to the top."

"But I never thought it would happen in my wildest dreams."

"I'm 46 now so I'll think about what I'm going to do."

"It is more than likely my last game."

"If they are struggling next year and they need someone to keep the ball you never know. But it's a great way to finish. I couldn't ask for any more than that."

"I couldn't have ended it any better."

PERFECT FINISH: Steve Claridge celebrates his second goal against Poole in the play-off final.

Picture by Charlotte Sprake



Taffy: we'll learn from play-off hurt

DEFIANT Taffy Richardson is confident Poole Town can win automatic promotion next season and insists: "The future is very bright."

The veteran midfielder, pictured above, was introduced from the bench but could not prevent Dolphins from suffering play-off agony against Gosport Borough on Monday.

Poole's bid to reclaim their place in the Southern League Premier Division after a 20-year absence was ended when Boro produced a late comeback to win 3-1 after extra-time.

But vastly experienced Richardson, 45, believes Tom Killick's men have the ability to go one better by winning the division next term.

Asked if Poole had a good enough team to top the table, he said: "Yes – you have got to think that."

"It was a massive learning curve for some of the players and they have learned well."

"We made mistakes on Monday and could have won the game, but it was another learning curve and it won't happen again."

"If we had started the league at Christmas when Tom had brought in other players, we would have won the league. We were better than everyone – everyone said that."

"I have got no concerns about Poole Town next season."

Richardson, who works as a firefighter, says Dolphins have

plenty to shout about following their first season back at Step 4 level.

He said: "We wanted to go up but in the scheme of things, from where Poole have come from and not having a ground and being in the Wessex League, it is a dream but it is achievable."

"The club, as a whole, have got to be proud of everything they have done."

"The club has got the biggest fan-base, a great board of directors, good lads and Tom is possibly the best manager for many levels up. The future is very bright."

Former Dorchester and Weymouth star Richardson made his 29th appearance of the season in the dramatic loss against Boro.

Marvin Brooks put Poole ahead in the first half and they were moments from victory when ex-Football League frontman Steve Claridge levelled in added time to stun a record Tatnam crowd of 1,716. Justin Bennett and Claridge then completed the turnaround in extra-time.

Richardson added: "We lost it, they didn't win it, but you have got to take off your hat to them."

"Gosport have scored so many goals late on that they must have something about them."

"But as Tom said, it was just naive. Tom said what we needed to do and people didn't do it."

er's pockets of space and caused all sorts of problems coming on late in the game."

Gosport's promotion continues the remarkable impact former Wessex League clubs have had at a higher level recently.

Of clubs promoted from the Wessex in the last decade, Eastleigh are now Conference South, with ambitious plans to gatecrash their way into the elite level of non league football.

AFC Totton are in the Southern Premier League that Gosport have now arrived in.

And the likes of Winchester City, Sholing, Poole Town, Wimborne and Thatcham are in the division Borough have left behind, Division 1 South & West of the Southern League.

Prior to all those club going up, Bashley were the trailblazers in the

late 1980s after winning the first three Wessex League titles.

They have been in the Southern League Premier since winning Division 1 South & West in 2006/07 helped by strikers Richard Gillespie and Ryan Moss scoring over 60 goals between them.

Gosport's promotion is also another feather in the managerial cap of Pike, the most successful manager in the history of the Wessex League.

He is the only manager to win the league with two different clubs (Wimborne and Gosport).

Pike is also the only manager to win the Wessex League Cup with two different clubs, Wimborne and Hamworthy.

And as previously mentioned, Pike is one of only two Wessex League bosses to ever win the FA Vase. Winchester's Neil Hards, in 2003/04, is the other.

Youth Football

ALRESFORD HIT TREBLE TOPS

ALRESFORD Town under-18s completed a club treble by winning the City of Southampton Youth League Division 2 title with a convincing 8-0 win over third-placed AFC Stoneham.

This for a club like Alresford was the seal to a brilliant season, with the Wessex Premier Senior side winning the North Hants Senior Cup and the Reserves winning the Wymern Combination League East Division.

This is a fantastic achievement for Alresford Football Club and portrays a bright future, with the reserves featuring a large number of the 2009/2010 U18 Hampshire Cup winning side, which was co-managed by Mark Bentley and current under-18 manager Kevin Coates; the present 18s have already had four members of the squad turnout for the reserves this season.

The 18s have played some brilliant football en route to securing the title on goal difference and have scored a staggering 95 goals in 15 league games, conceding only 24 in return, with two defeats and a draw spoiling a perfect record.

"We changed the formation after Christmas after a slow start and the players adapted superbly and have worked tirelessly to achieve the standard they are at now," said Coates.

He added: "With still another year to go at under-18 level, the lads are developing into real quality players and will be pushing hard to be considered for selection for the reserves next season."



LEAGUE CROWN: Alresford Town under-18s.

Cup clash

HOUNSDOWN and Bitterne Park go head-to-head in the Hampshire Schools' FA Under-15 Cup final at Southampton Solent University's Test Park stadium on Monday, 3pm.

Jamie Betteridge, with 26 goals in 14 games, will be the main threat for Hounslowdown, who were New Forest schools' champions this season.

Hounslowdown coach Michael Jeffrey said: "The boys have been exceptional this year and exceeded all expectations."

"To win the New Forest League was great but to be in the county cup final is a real bonus."

"We are under no illusion that we are facing a quality outfit in Bitterne Park and we are huge underdogs but we are determined to show how strong our team spirit is and be more than competitive in this final."

Bitterne Park were ESFA Cup quarter-finalists and only beaten in a dramatic penalty shoot-out by Croydon's Shirley Park.

Hounslowdown squad: Jack Nicolson, Kieran Martin, George Jones, Ashley John, Matthew Wateridge, Taylor Vane, Tom Pattison, Matthew Elsworth, Marcus Buchan, Charlie Plumley, Jamie Betteridge, Connor Lamb, Ed Cooper, Anton Lee, Alex Clark, Brandon Willis.

SAINTS' DOUBLE DELIGHT

SOUTHAMPTON Saints Girls & Ladies FC under-16s secured a league and cup double by defeating south coast rivals Portsmouth in the final of the Cardington Cup.

They recovered from a goal down to come on strong in the second half and win the match 5-1.

Portsmouth went ahead in the first half with a goal from close range but Saints were level by the break thanks to Cleo Rawlings' fierce shot into the top corner.

Saints upped the tempo in the second half and went ahead when Georgina Axton's corner found Rawlings lurking in the six-yard box and she had a simple tap-in.

Megan Richmond made it 3-1 with a powerful shot from close to the touchline and Saints made it four when Rawlings's header set up Bonnie Browning who made no mistake.

Rawlings then hit the bar from at least 35 yards out before Lauren Steers bagged a deserved goal, skilfully lobbing the ball over the keeper to complete Saints' tally.

Saints play Portsmouth Ladies on Sunday, this time in the final of the Stein Cup.

● The club's under-14s



BOGNOR RUNNERS-UP: Southampton Saints Girls & Ladies FC under-16s.

strengthened their position at the top of the New Forest Girls' League with a 2-0 victory at Corfe Mullen - Elle Pearce and Cleo Rawlings on target.

● Saints' under-10s were runners-up in the Bognor Regis Spring Festival of Football tournament.

They defeated Eastbourne Ladies 2-1 in their first match, courtesy of Jennifer King's dou-

ble, but lost out 1-0 to Writtle Minors in their second match.

Saints bounced back with a 1-0 victory over Mile Oak, Jennifer King getting the winner and keeper Annie Bulkeley making some smart saves.

They secured second place in the table with a 1-1 draw against Denham United in their final match - Kia Antoney levelling for Saints.



WORTHYS YFC UNDER-11s: Celebrating victory in the Jock McClorey Cup and promotion after finishing second in Division 2 of the Testway League. Back row (from left): Adam Day, Loughlan Stephenson, Luke Corbin, Ian Snellgrove (coach), Reuben Clark, Tom McCullagh, Max Doyle. Front: Darcy Farwell, Will James, Ollie Marshall, Charlie Blaxland, Lucas Lyne, Harry Snellgrove.

EMAIL YOUTH REPORT TO echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

Youth Football

Hants hurt

A LATE Dorset equaliser denied Hampshire Schools a second Reed Under-14 Trophy, wiping out a header by Bitterne Park's Adam May, which looked to have secured the county victory.

The Reed Trophy involves under-14 sides from Berkshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Oxfordshire and, courtesy of a 5-2 win over Berkshire in their group opener, Neil Ainsworth's side were in a good position.

Hampshire seized the lead through May following a bit of 'head tennis' in the Dorset six-yard box – the ball coming back off the crossbar onto May's waiting head.

But in the closing minutes, Hampshire gave away two free kicks in their own half and Dorset equalised when the second set-piece clipped the inside of the upright and went in.



HAMPSHIRE UNDER-14s: Standing (left-right): Neil Ainsworth, Ed Mahoney, Ben Hull, Charlie Coombs, Aaron Bunday, Callum Stanton, Dory Yates, Alfie Rutherford, Jack Attrill. Seated: Calvin Davis, Adam May, Sam Beadle, Harvey Thompson, Mitch Speechley-Price, George Pooley.



LINE UP: Brockenhurst College show off their Silverlake Automotive Recycling and Udonateacar sponsored kit. Back row (left to right): Tom Dufaur, Lewis Ross, Luke Flux, Ross Hampton-Brown, Hugh Dathan, Tony Rolls, Jack Lovell, Richard Vallis, Lewis Proudley. Seated: Nathan Saxby, Harry Cooper, Adam Stride, Kieran Burgess, Brad Hill, Brad Morris, Jamie Grose. Also pictured: Caleb Porter (inset left) and Peter Barnicoat (inset right).

BROCK HEARTBREAK

TWO goals behind early on, brave Brockenhurst fought back to equalise in their British Colleges Cup final against Liverpool's Greenbank College, only to suffer the heartbreak of a 3-2 extra-time defeat.

Brock took time to settle against the long-ball tactics of physically strong Merseyside opposition in the Tamworth final and were chasing the game after two early strikes by Paul Mullen, a former Anfield scholar, writes **MIKE VIMPANY**.

"I think our lads were perhaps intimidated by the occasion and their counterparts' directness and conceded two goals in those early stages," conceded Brock Academy coach Graham Mills.

"But we enjoyed fantastic travelling support and the guys responded from the backing they got from the touch-line."

Keeping the ball on the ground – a total contrast in style to the direct approach of Greenbank – Brockenhurst went on to enjoy some good spells of

possession and after 30 minutes Harry Cooper found some space to drill a shot into the bottom corner to reduce the deficit to 2-1.

"We went in at half-time with the momentum and team talk and tactical changes obviously worked as the second half was won comfortably by Brockenhurst," Mills said.

"We laid siege to Greenbank's goal but, unfortunately, were only able to convert one of the chances that our dominance created."

Adam Stride was played in on the right and cut in on his left foot to slide the ball under the Greenbanks keeper for his 18th goal of the season and Brock's equaliser.

Brockenhurst enjoyed further chances to win the game presented themselves and came within inches of hitting the winner when Brad Hill hit the upright in the dying minutes.

Brock continued to dominate in extra-time but the chances that fell to Nathan Saxby and Hill were not snapped up.

The second period of extra-time had barely begun when Greenbanks – scorers of 130-odd goals this season and

beaten only twice domestically – grabbed their winner, with the impressive Mullen completing his hat-trick.

Brock stuck rigidly to their footballing game plan but despite continuing to create opportunities weren't able to salvage the tie.

Mills said: "I am immensely proud of my players' efforts this evening and throughout the course of the season. It is the end of an era for some of them."

"While the players were understandably heartbroken, they can be very proud of the fact that they stuck to ethos of the academy and were the team that endeavoured to play the game in the way it should be played."

"Sometimes it is all too easy to focus on the result, and on this occasion we fell short, but in football, particularly college football, the process and development of players is what's most important."

"Each one of the players involved in the final will come away from this game and will be better players for this experience."

"They have been fantastic to work with and are a credit to the college."



SOUTHAMPTON Boys are all smiles after coming from behind to beat Portsmouth 2-1 after extra time in the Hampshire Schools' Under-15 Pickford Shield final at Moneyfields.

They fell behind to a George Thomas penalty shortly before half-time but three minutes after the break were on levels terms through Hayden Riddett's far post header from a Tommy Wright free-kick. Both sides had goals disallowed



ON TARGET: Tony Lee (left) and Hayden Riddett (right) whose goals earned Southampton Boys their 2-1 Pickford Shield win.

for offside before Tony Lee grabbed Southampton's extra-time winner. Southampton have an opportunity to enhance their

silverware collection when they face Oxford Boys in the Wright Cup final at Colden Common next Saturday morning, May 19.

All the latest sports news at your fingertips with the new **Pink App**.

For unrivalled coverage of the Saints, the local non-league scene, as well as a look at years gone by and a full round up of the weekend's sport.

It's all in The Sports Pink

With the best selection of comment, interviews and features, make sure you're on the ball with the new Pink App

- Full printed edition delivered to your iPad, iPhone or iPod Touch every Saturday night
- View and search previous editions
- Access to The Pink wherever you are
- Share stories using facebook and twitter
- Newsstand compatible (on iOS5 or above)



FREE
for the first week

1 month	£2.49
3 months	£6.99
6 months	£12.99
12 months	£23.99



Available on the App Store



Daily Echo

Cricket Stats

Dimi burst seals win

DIMI Mascarenhas, below, took five second innings wickets to help bowl Hampshire to a Second Division Championship victory at Headingley in May 2004.

That was one of just three first class wins for the county in Yorkshire since 1977.

Wicketkeeper Nic Pothas was Hampshire's batting star with a century in the first innings and another top score of 77 in the second.



County Championship 2004 (Division 2)
Headingley, May 2004

Hampshire first innings

DA Kenway c Jacques b Hoggard 4
MJ Brown lbw b Blain 13
WS Kendall c Wood b Blain 50
MJ Clarke b Blain 11
LR Prittipaul c Guy b Harvey 12
N Pothas c Hoggard b Silverwood 100
AD Mascarenhas c Guy b Dawson 49
SD Udal c and b Silverwood 21
CT Tremlett b White 13
BV Taylor c Harvey b Silverwood 12
AD Mullally not out 1
Extras 36

Total (all out, 94 overs) 322
Fall 1-4 2-54 3-80 4-97 5-115 6-195 7-250 8-279 9-317 10-322

Bowling: Hoggard 22-5-64-1; Silverwood 17-6-61-3; Blain 19-5-63-3; Harvey 14-4-32-1; McGrath 8-2-30-0; Dawson 6-1-26-1; White 8-1-25-1

Yorkshire first innings

MJ Wood c Clarke b Mullally 16
C White c Clarke b Tremlett 17
A McGrath c Pothas b Mascarenhas 37
PA Jacques b Taylor 31
MJ Lumb c and b Udal 83
IJ Harvey c Udal b Tremlett 22
SM Guy c Kendall b Taylor 7
RKJ Dawson c Pothas b Tremlett 35
CEW Silverwood lbw b Udal 30
JAR Blain lbw b Udal 6
MJ Hoggard not out 2
Extras 30

Total (all out, 80.4 overs) 316
Fall 1-40 2-40 3-110 4-116 5-170 6-193 7-246 8-295 9-305 10-316

Bowling: Mullally 19-4-71-1; Tremlett 21-3-77-3; Mascarenhas 19-3-85-1; Taylor 14-4-46-2; Clarke 1-0-5-0; Prittipaul 2-0-7-0; Udal 4-4-1-8-3

Hampshire second innings

DA Kenway lbw b Silverwood 20
MJ Brown lbw b Blain 20
WS Kendall c Guy b Silverwood 0
MJ Clarke c Jacques b Silverwood 6
LR Prittipaul lbw b Blain 17
N Pothas c Guy b White 77
AD Mascarenhas c Lumb b Blain 25
SD Udal c McGrath b White 52
CT Tremlett b Dawson 35
BV Taylor run out 7
AD Mullally not out 22
Extras 32

Total (all out, 72.4 overs) 313
Fall 1-29 2-29 3-35 4-64 5-73 6-147 7-219 8-284 9-284 10-313

Bowling: Hoggard 15-1-60-0; Silverwood 15-3-47-3; Blain 14-1-76-3; White 11-1-46-2; Harvey 11-3-37-0; Dawson 5-4-1-27-1; McGrath 1-1-0-0

Yorkshire second innings

MJ Wood c Kenway b Mascarenhas 45
C White c Pothas b Taylor 10
A McGrath lbw b Tremlett 18
PA Jacques c Kenway b Mascarenhas 78
MJ Lumb c Clarke b Mascarenhas 0
IJ Harvey c Clarke b Mascarenhas 4
SM Guy c Prittipaul b Taylor 8
RKJ Dawson b Taylor 8
CEW Silverwood b Tremlett 10
JAR Blain b Mascarenhas 1
MJ Hoggard not out 1
Extras 17

Total (all out, 55.5 overs) 200
Fall: 1-35 2-79 3-85 4-85 5-89 6-130 7-150 8-172 9-181 10-200

Bowling: Tremlett 15-3-56-2; Mullally 14-3-47-0; Taylor 13-2-50-3; Mascarenhas 13.5-2-44-5
Hampshire won by 119 runs

Simon Walter

simon.walter@dailyecho.co.uk

CRICKET REPORTER

LESS than a decade ago, Bilal Shafayat was captaining an England Under-19 side including Alastair Cook.

How the paths of these two 27-year-olds have differed since Shafayat's last appearance for his country, in which he top scored with 121 against South Africa's most talented teenagers at Worcester in the summer of 2003.

Shafayat has since been released by Nottinghamshire and Northants, while Cook has become the youngest England batsman to make 6,000 Test runs.

Also in that U19 side were the likes of Ravi Bopara, Samit Patel, Luke Wright and Tim Bresnan.

While they have all gone on to play for the full England side in various formats with notable success, Shafayat's career hit the buffers when he was jettisoned by Notts in 2010.

Now registered for first-class cricket with Hampshire, he aims to grasp what could be his last chance to fulfil his potential.

Shafayat was a real prodigy during his teenage years. Interestingly, he averaged significantly more in U19 Tests (54) than England's one-day captain Cook (39), once hitting 118 and 201* in a match against India.

Admittedly, Cook was more successful in U19 one-day internationals, but back then Shafayat was on a par as an England player of the future.

Appeared briefly

"In any sport it's about timing," he said. "At that time I was doing really well and could potentially have gone into the Test squad but it didn't work out."

Shafayat has appeared on the Test stage, albeit briefly as England's 12th man. Even now he is best known for his cameo role at the end of the opening Test of the 2009 Ashes.

Like Gary Pratt (another former England U19 teammate) in 2005, Shafayat infuriated Australia captain Ricky Ponting with his 12th man antics during an Ashes series win.

Twice he came on to the pitch during the final session of that Cardiff Test, using up valuable time, while James Anderson and Monty Panesar famously secured an unlikely draw.

But Shafayat wants to be known for more than that.

"I haven't done a lot in the game yet," he admits. "Someone pointed out to me last year that I've been around ten years which was kind of scary!"

"But I'll continue working hard and as long as I keep doing so hopefully I'll be picked

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



Hants new boy wants more than a 12th man memory!



HOWZAT! Hampshire new boy Bilal Shafayat, right, appeals for a wicket while playing for Nottinghamshire.

I've been around ten years - which is scary - but I haven't done a lot in the game yet

up by someone."

Shafayat has signed a short-term deal with Hampshire, available on a match-by-match basis during a busy pre-Twenty20 period in the LV County Championship.

Last May he hit an unbeaten 219 for Hampshire against Glamorgan in the Second Eleven Championship followed by another century

against Middlesex seconds.

Having started this season as Shropshire's professional, he again impressed for Hampshire's seconds last week, top scoring in both innings of a three-day match against Essex.

It was enough to secure his opportunity at The Ageas Bowl.

"Hampshire had a full squad

MIKE VIMPANY'S LOCAL CRICKET - SEE PAGES 26/27

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



Simon Katich is a lovely guy with great experience and someone I've been badgering

last year but I got a deal at Northants," says Shafayat, who returned for a second spell at Wantage Rd. "It didn't quite go to plan, unfortunately I only played Twenty20 cricket. The four-day team was doing really well and they didn't want to change it.

"But I knew something would come along if I did the right things and looked after

my own game. I went away to Pakistan in the winter to play four-day cricket for Habib Bank, who have shown great support for me.

"I played nine games, which kept me in great form, and then went to Australia to continue my gym work and play some club cricket, which has kept me in good nick."

Shafayat has his chance at

Hampshire following the departures of Michael Lumb, Benny Howell and Johann Myburgh and the recent unavailability of Jimmy Adams (personal reasons) and Michael Carberry (England Lions).

"I've played four second-team games for Hampshire now and showed some form last week," he continued. "I think that's what's convinced the first team's selection team, with more strength in depth needed in the batting.

"If I can fit in here I'll be more than happy," he says. "The guys are very friendly, there are experienced players to learn from and the support staff's very good."

It is hard to understand why Shafayat is yet to fulfil his early promise (he averages a modest 29.7 in first-class cricket).

As well as having natural talent he is very personable and has shown considerable mental strength not to have walked away from the game.

The economic climate makes it more difficult than ever for players in his position.

With counties now given financial incentives by the ECB to select players under 26, he is grateful to have a foot in the door.

"Staffs are getting younger and younger, 27 is not a young age under the new rulings," he says. "But we still have something to offer to give the right balance to a squad."

There is no doubt Shafayat still firmly believes in his own ability.

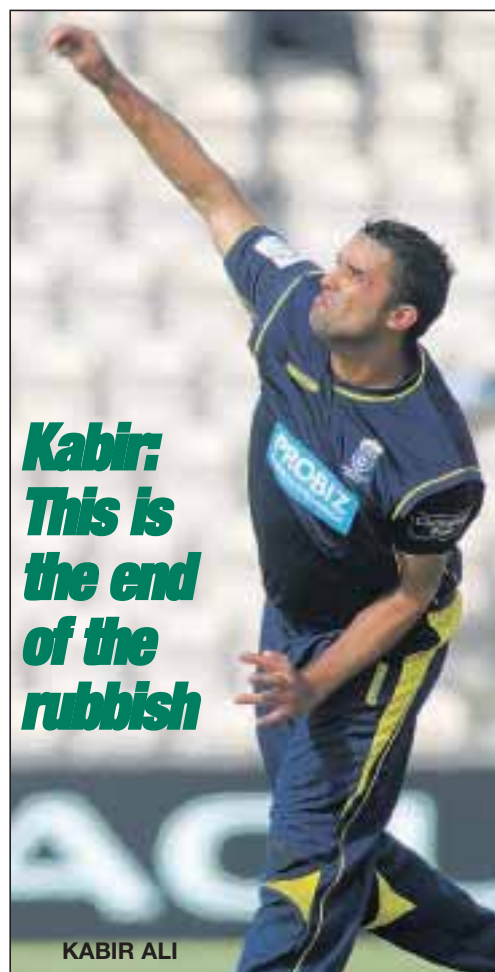
"The PCA (Professional Cricketers Association) has always been very helpful and is getting better and better. There are more options out there for life after cricket. But as long as this is my number-one career and ambition I'll carry on doing it.

"This period has been good for me to work on my game. I'm trying to stay ready to make this comeback better than ever before. It's about being tougher for the challenge ahead. You can only look to

improve."

For that reason, Shafayat is glad to be on the same side as Katich, an Ashes adversary on that memorable afternoon at the SWALEC Stadium three years ago.

"Kat played very well in that Cardiff Test, he's a lovely guy with great experience and is someone I've already been badgering - he's a quality guy to learn from!" smiles Hampshire's new boy.



Kabir: This is the end of the rubbish

KABIR ALI

KABIR Ali is confident that he has put his freak injuries behind him after returning to action for Hampshire.

The former England bowler took 3-44 in last week's Clydesdale Bank 40 win against Glamorgan, only his second one-day appearance for Hampshire since signing more than two years ago.

Kabir also made his 11th Championship appearance for Hampshire against Derbyshire this week, having recovered from his latest freak injury.

The 32-year-old had been sidelined by an ankle sprain suffered in bizarre circumstances on Hampshire's pre-season tour to Barbados.

"I was running for a catch and had a back spasm at the same time!" he recalls. "As the ball landed I trod on it - I was very unlucky.

"If I tried to do it again 100 times I'm sure I couldn't. I was gutted! But fortunately I'm quite a positive guy because you can't afford to get down about these things."

Prior to his ankle sprain, Kabir suffered a serious knee injury during a training session, having made an

impressive start to his Hampshire career at the start of the 2010 season (he has 32 first-class wickets at 28.9 apiece from his first ten Championship outings in a Hampshire shirt).

"The big one was my knee but fortunately that feels good and the ankle's fine too," he said.

"I had a freak shoulder injury eight years ago but hopefully this is the end of all that rubbish...fingers crossed.

"I've had two years of bad luck but the medical staff have got me through the last couple of years.

"Sometimes with bowlers these things happen but because of the weather I haven't missed out on too much cricket."

Kabir is in the last year of his Hampshire contract but at 31 he believes he still has a few good seasons left in him.

"We'll see what happens," he said. "I've missed out on a couple of years but my body feels strong and hopefully I'll have these two years on the other side.

"I've still got good pace and my skill's swing so as long as my wrist is ok I'll be ok for a little while yet."

Cricket Stats

Marshall's rare ton

WEST Indian legend Malcolm Marshall starred with the bat, rather than the ball, when Hampshire claimed a rare win at Yorkshire in 1990.

Hampshire travel to Headingley for a Championship match next week, a ground where they have only won three first class games since 1977.

One of those was 22 years ago when Marshall, pictured, batting at No 5, struck 117 - one of his seven first class hundreds.

Brothers Robin and Chris Smith both scored half-centuries in the second Hampshire innings of their five-wicket victory.

Britannic Assurance County Championship 1990

Yorkshire first innings

SA Kellett c Gower b Connor	56
AA Metcalfe c Maru b Connor	22
RJ Blakey c Parks b Shine	17
PE Robinson lbw b Shine	60
D Byas b Shine	29
DL Bairstow c Connor b Turner	37
P Carrick c Maru b Marshall	23
PJ Hartley c Terry b Shine	3
CS Pickles not out	13
D Gough not out	7
Extras	33
Total (8 wickets declared)	300
Fall: 1-56, 2-93, 3-130, 4-200, 5-225, 6-259, 7-279, 8-288	
Bowling: Marshall 22-7-44-1; Shine 19-2-52-4; Maru 21-9-43-0; Connor 21-2-79-2; Turner 16.5-3-63-1	

Hampshire first innings

VP Terry lbw b Pickles	23
CL Smith c Kellett b Hartley	28
DI Gower lbw b Hartley	64
RA Smith b Pickles	15
MD Marshall c Blakey b Carrick	117
MCJ Nicholas lbw b Fletcher	0
RJ Maru c Bairstow b Gough	25
RJ Parks not out	36
IJ Turner not out	0
Extras	29
Total (7 wickets, declared)	337
Fall: 1-53, 2-61, 3-99, 4-178, 5-182, 6-281, 7-337	
Bowling: Hartley 23-6-68-2; Fletcher 20-5-57-1; Carrick 15.4-6-46-1; Pickles 14-1-64-2; Gough 13-3-67-1; Byas 7-1-13-0	

Yorkshire second innings

SA Kellett c sub b Turner	26
AA Metcalfe c CL Smith b Connor	35
RJ Blakey b Connor	20
PE Robinson b Connor	24
D Byas c Maru b Connor	0
DL Bairstow lbw b Marshall	9
P Carrick c Gower b Marshall	32
PJ Hartley c Terry b Nicholas	5
CS Pickles not out	57
D Gough c Shine b Marshall	8
SD Fletcher c Gower b Connor	6
Extras	29
Total (all out)	251
Fall: 1-45, 2-84, 3-100, 4-100, 5-113, 6-138, 7-153, 8-186, 9-230, 10-251 (72.5 ov)	
Bowling: Marshall 22-5-51-3; Shine 8-0-50-0; Connor 27.5-3-96-5; Turner 9-5-19-1; Nicholas 6-1-14-1	

Hampshire second innings

VP Terry b Fletcher	18
CL Smith c Bairstow b Gough	58
DI Gower c Robinson b Gough	33
RA Smith not out	51
MD Marshall b Gough	28
MCJ Nicholas c Gough b Hartley	15
RJ Parks not out	1
Extras	11
Total (5 wickets)	215
Fall: 1-37, 2-103, 3-113, 4-181, 5-206	
Bowling: Hartley 15-3-52-1; Fletcher 14-1-66-1; Pickles 4-0-25-0; Gough 12.5-1-61. Hampshire won by 5 wickets	

Local Cricket Spotlight

Coin toss for cup progress

VENTNOR'S immediate ECB Kingfisher Cup fate is set to be decided by the toss on a coin, instead of on the cricket field.

Alton's ground at the Jubilee Fields is so wet the groundsmen have been unable to get on it for the past three weeks, as a consequence of which tomorrow's scheduled first round tie (already postponed three times) has been cancelled altogether.

Switching the tie to Ventnor's Steephill wasn't considered an option, so the match will be decided on the toss of a coin at Lord's.

Havant and Liphook & Ripsley are still struggling to play their long delayed first round tie – they plan to have another go at Ripsley Park tomorrow – while in round two Bashley (Rydal) face a formidable task at mighty Bath.

Richard Morris smashed 32 runs off one over – five successive sixes over mid-wicket and a two – to bring Bashley's tie at Corsham last week to a rapid conclusion.

Morris, who has taken over the Bashley captaincy from Andy Neal, finished with 102 not out.

South Wilts saw off Totton & Eling to set up a visit to Bournemouth, for whom skipper Scott Barlow grabbed a hat-trick in the emphatic victory at Warminster.

Bournemouth and South Wilts plan to go head-to-head tomorrow, but Chapel Gate is saturated.

Gallop off

GOSPORT Borough's would-be Australian overseas recruit has literally Galloped out of town ...

Last year's Hampshire League champions gambled on Aussie youngster Tom Gallop to help cement their place back in Southern Electric Premier League Division 3 this season.

It was a big ask for the 19-year-old University of NSW third grader, especially following in the footsteps of Queenslander Leeland Zeller, who contributed a mere 712 runs and 31 wickets towards Borough's promotion drive last season.

But homesickness, caused mainly by the weather and the total absence of any cricket, has led to Gallop quitting the Privett Park scene and heading to the sunnier climes of Bickley Park in the Kent League.

Gosport are understood to be combing the length and breadth of New Zealand for a replacement.

Joe in charge

ST CROSS Symondians' prospect Joe Weatherley captains Hampshire Under-15s in a county friendly match against Surrey at Normandy, near Guildford, tomorrow (11.30am).

Hampshire U15s: Joe Weatherley (captain), Felix Ambrose, Will Arnold, Eddie Lewis, Andy Gorvin, Scott Tilson (wicket-keeper), JJ Brown, Ryan Murray, Charlie Ayers, Brad Taylor, Mason Crane, Luke Evans, Rory Prentice.

Extended Tea break ...

FOUR Hampshire clubs are set to have their immediate Yorkshire Tea Village Cup fate sealed by the toss of a coin tomorrow.

It's wet weather reserve day in the first round of the national competition which has its final at Lord's – and already Bramshaw, Burridge, Hurstbourne Priors and Paultons have been forced to concede home advantage through their grounds being unfit last week.

If those rain-delayed ties don't go ahead tomorrow, then someone at *The Cricketer* magazine, who organises the competition, will be calling

heads or tails to decide who goes through to next weekend's second round.

Local ties scheduled for tomorrow: Hambledon v Paultons, Longparish v Bramshaw, Ropley v Hurstbourne Priors, Sparsholt v Burridge.

Hursley Park and Tichborne Park did manage to play – and win – their first round ties last weekend.

Hursley whisked Godshill out for 73 – the pacy Nick Wheeler returning a career-best 3-9 – before openers Matt Branford (41) and young Joe Theobald (27) polished off the target.

Micky Butler, pictured right, domi-

nated Tichborne Park's ten-wicket victory over Damerham.

He took 4-11 with the new ball and, along with Jake Bristoe (3-18) and Will Allam (2-12), zipped the New Forest club out for 80.

Refreshed by his 'half-time' Yorkshire Tea cuppa, Butler then blitzed the Damerham boundary with a volley of sixes.

He hit six in all – 36 of his runs being maximums. Butler finished with 59 not out and Ed Primmer a more subdued 21 not out as Tichborne Park tie up a second-round derby at Easton & Martyr Worthy next Sunday, May 20.



DAN DARES FOR TITLE

BASINGSTOKE and North Hants captain Dan Coombs believes that he has a team capable of competing for the Thames Valley League title.

The Bountymen are due to get their season under way today against Reading at May's Bounty, writes **JOHN BOYMAN**.

They missed out on promotion by the narrowest of margins at the end of last season, but have lost four big players over the winter.

Opening left-arm bowler Chris Wood has established himself in the Hampshire team and is unlikely to turn out for Basingstoke this season, while Adam Rouse has joined St Cross Symondians in the ECB Southern Electric Premier league.

In addition, West Indian overseas player Dillon Heyliger is not returning this season, while opening batsman Russell Droy, who captained the side last year, is no longer at the club.

However, new captain Coombs – who studied at Southampton Solent University – said he still has plenty of talented players at his disposal.

"Last year, we had a strong collection of players and we have lost a few of them – but on paper we have still got individuals who are good enough to win the league," said Coombs.

"Last year, we might have had a stronger side, but in 25 per cent of the games we all played badly on the same day. This year, we have got to be as consistent as we can and just see what happens.

"I think it is going to be one of those seasons where you do not know what might happen until you get started. I still believe that we are good enough to compete, but it will be tough because there are some strong teams in there."

They may have lost some important players but Coombs is backing left-arm spinner David Pistorius to make a big impact.

"We have been a bit lucky to pick up David," the skipper added. "He

CONFIDENT: New Basingstoke & North Hants skipper Dan Coombs, right.



has come to the club through a friend of a friend and was unlucky not to get five wickets in a friendly match.

"In the past, we have lacked a spinner like him. He is an attacking spinner and turns the ball quite a long way.

"With him, Martyn James and Jon Bradley, we have got a good bowling attack and I fancy us to bowl sides out."

The batting side of things may be more of a problem with Droy, Wood, Rouse and Heyliger all missing from last year's line-up, while Richard Vinn is out with a broken shoulder.

"I think batting-wise, it is just a case of being consistent," Coombs said. "I have looked to give us a solid top five, with Chris Froud moving up from the second team."

"This is a big year for Craig Williamson. He showed signs that he could score runs last season but we need him to do that every week."

At 22, Coombs is a very young captain – but he is confident in his own ability and is looking forward to leading the side out against Reading on Saturday.

"I am pretty young to be captain, and it has possibly come around a bit earlier than I thought it

would," he said. "However, I have been in the first team for four or five years though, so I think I have got the experience to do it."

"It's going to be a tough test this week. I'm not sure what sort of team Reading will have after being relegated, but matches between the two sides are always tight. If we are able to play, it will be difficult conditions to bat in so we will have to dig in as best we can – but I fancy our bowlers to take ten wickets."

● Basingstoke & North Hants face Cove in a rain delayed ECB Kingfisher Cup first round tie at Grassmere Road tomorrow.

Local Cricket Spotlight

SEPL SKIPPERS DEFEND TAYLOR'S WORLD RECORD INNINGS



RIVAL captains Richard Morris, Scott Barlow and Darren Cowley have leapt to the defence of Dave Taylor after he rewrote the cricket record books – and then came in for some fierce stick.

Taylor, Totton & Eling's captain and coach, hit an undefeated 330 in the Eels' 309-run win over Southern Premier League Division Three rivals Trojans, a world record for an adult in 50-overs, **writes NEIL PERRETT.**

The 37-year-old former Worcestershire and Derbyshire all-rounder turned out for Totton seconds after the club's scheduled trip to Lymington in Division One had been washed out.

Taylor was criticised by former Totton captain David Banks who described the triple century as "pointless" and not in the spirit of the competition, especially as he is a coach to young players.

Banks told the *Portsmouth News*: "If you are the captain and coach of the first team and you are trying to help youngsters, I'm not sure how batting for 50 overs and scoring 330 does that."

However, Bashley skipper Morris, who was due to pit his wits against Taylor today, begged to differ and said he felt the remarkable feat would set a good example to young players.

Morris told the *Bournemouth Daily Echo*: "Given the current situation with the weather, I can see why he would have wanted a game. I don't have a problem with it and think it was fine. I don't think people should worry too much about it. It was there to be appreciated."

"It sets a good example that, if you get in, you go on to make a big score. It is a lesson a lot of young players, especially as they have grown up with 20/20 and limited overs cricket, sometimes tend to forget."

Bournemouth captain Barlow said: "I have nothing against people dropping down to get a game at this time of year. It was clearly a good innings but, once he had reached 150, nobody really gained anything, especially the rest of the Totton batsmen who didn't get in."

And Lymington's Cowley, whose father Nigel enjoyed a successful first-class career with Hampshire, said: "I can see both sides. I don't blame him for trying to get a game and, 330 in

any standard, is very impressive. I will be making myself available for our seconds if our game is called off tomorrow."

Taylor defended his actions when he said: "I hardly had any batting practice in the winter and pre-season nets. In my coaching role, I saw it as my task to ensure everyone else got a knock."

"When one of the originally selected

players dropped out of the Trojans game, it was the general view of the club management that I should play and, if possible, go and get as much proper middle practice as I could."

"It was important I got out and faced the new ball and got in some game time, simple as that. I was partnered by two teenagers and a 20-year old during my time at the crease."



NO PLAY TODAY! These are the waterlogged scenes at Bashley (Rydal), who were due to host Totton & Eling in the ECB Southern Electric Premier League today.

Cricket in mourning for Ken

LOCAL cricket is mourning the death at his Yorkshire home of Ken Langley, pictured, a hugely respected NCA and ECB coach, who played for United Services in their triumphant Hampshire League days and during the Burnaby Road club's initial period in the Southern League.

Ken, 76, whose three sons Gareth, Paul and Shaun were all very decent cricketers, served the Royal Navy with distinction and in his latter days in the Senior Service was an instructor at HMS Sultan in Gosport.

BBC commentator Ralph Dellow, a close friend, said: "The great thing about Ken, for me, was that it was very difficult to be miserable in his presence. Of course, I was mortified to hear of his untimely death but rather than

be sad, I remember his cheery disposition and ready smile and chuckle.

"Instead of being gloomy, I

shall instead remember all the happy times spent with him and be honoured to have been counted among his friends."

A retired Lt Cdr, Ken captained the Royal Navy cricket team in 1977 and 1978 and was an accomplished performer behind the stumps for both the RN and the Combined Services.

He will be best remembered locally as a top cricket coach and tutor, initially with the National Cricket Association and then the ECB.

Upon his retirement, he moved from Gosport back to his native Yorkshire, following cricket and his other passion, rugby league.

Former Hampshire 2nd XI wicketkeeper Mark Garaway, one of the ECB's leading cricket coaches, referred to Ken Langley as "a legend".

"I remember the first coaching course I ever went on as a youngster Ken taught me. I learned a great deal from him and will be eternally grateful."

MIKE VIMPANY

Daily Echo



2 days from
£89.95

The Investec Derby Festival 2012

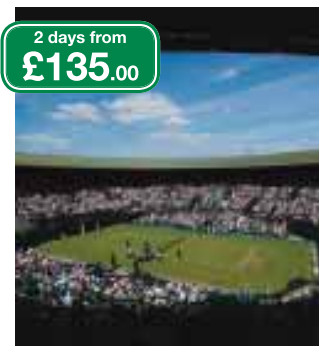
Departs 1 June 2012

Experience drama and excitement as Epsom Downs hosts The Derby on this great value two-day break. The 2012 Derby will be attended by Her Majesty The Queen as she celebrates her Diamond Jubilee. With admission to the meeting on two days included in the price, plus one night's accommodation, this break is a sure bet.

Price includes ● Return coach travel ● One night's bed and continental breakfast accommodation in a three star hotel in the London area ● Two days' admission to The Hill Enclosure at Epsom Downs Racecourse ● The services of a Tour Manager

Great Value Coach Holidays

2 days from
£135.00



Wimbledon

2-day coach inclusive break

Departs 7 & 8 July 2012

This is your chance to soak up the unique atmosphere of the world's premier Grand Slam tennis championships over the final weekend, as you wander around the outside courts, savouring those famous strawberries and cream – with perhaps a glass of Champagne or Pimms – spotting tennis celebrities and well known personalities, before taking your seat on famous No.1 Court, to watch the stars of tomorrow and yesteryear compete in the finals of the Junior and Veterans' events.

Price includes ● Return coach travel ● One night's bed and continental breakfast accommodation at a three-star hotel in the London area ● A full day at Wimbledon with a reserved seat on No.1 Court ● A visit to Windsor ● The services of a Tour Manager

COACH HOLIDAYS

NEWMARKET Holidays

SAVE NOW ON A NEW BOILER

Class A Vaillant Ecotec (WHICH magazine boiler of the year 2011), fully fitted and equipped with digital programmer. **FREE** system **Power Flush** (worth £300) for systems ordered before 11th June 2012.

A typical installation costs **JUST £1,625 + VAT*** all inclusive and we give a **5-year guarantee on all parts**.

*Subject to our FREE survey



AND KEEP ON SAVING

The Vaillant Ecotec boiler included in this offer is 92% efficient and will reduce your fuel bills—in many cases quite dramatically. It also produces hot water direct from the boiler on demand. Your hot water tank will be redundant and you will only heat the water you need when you need it

023 8036 6423

www.heatingmyhome.com



*Delivery Results
Without Surgery*

**Southampton's Premier Unisex Non-surgical
Cosmetic Health & Beauty Clinic**
Offering the following treatments



FACE & BODY TREATMENTS

- Facial Toning
- Lines/Wrinkles
- Eyebags
- Skin Hydration
- Bust & Bottom Lift
- Orbital Micro-dermabrasions
- Acne/Blemishes
- Neck Treatments
- Stretch Marks
- Hand Treatments
- Cellulite

MAY OFFER

New Caci Wrinkle Revolution
Needle free alternative to collagen
injections and dermal fillers
Treatments 25% off course of 10
Normal Price £250 now £187.50



NEW TREATMENTS

We are pleased to announce the following SPA TREATMENTS for the continued Health & Wellbeing of our clients
Elemis Massage – Exotic Lime & Ginger Salt Glow, Exotic Frangipani Body Nourish Wrap, Cellutox Aroma Spa Ocean Wrap
Swedish Back & Body Massage, Reflexology and Indian Head Massage
20% Discount off Spa Treatments booked during May
Please contact our therapist for details

Tel: 08445 447898 • www.u4life.co.uk

Unit 37 Locks Heath Shopping Centre SO31 6DX

GATES PEUGEOT

BROCKENHURST • SOUTHAMPTON • ESTABLISHED 1945

**SERVICING | MOT | WARRANTY
PARTS | NEW & USED CAR SALES**

Collection and delivery service
Courtesy Cars and Commuter link

NU 12 REG

WWW.GATESPEUGEOT.COM

GREAT OFFERS ON ALL OF OUR RANGE
CHECK WEBSITE FOR DETAILS

Motability



NIL ADVANCE DEPOSIT ON MANY OF THE
RANGE. PLEASE TELEPHONE FOR DETAILS

Tel: 01590 623344

WWW.GATESPEUGEOT.COM
Sway Road Brockenhurst SO42 7SH

www.winterslowcarriagecompany.co.uk



1994/L AUTO-HOMES AVALON
X4 BERTH TALBOT EXPRESS 1.9
DIESEL HIGH TOP with full service
history and 68,000 miles from new,
hob/grill/oven, 3 way fridge, 240v
elec hook up, toilet/shower room,
rear parking aid camera, side
awning, a superb example
£7,995



1995/N ELDDIS AUTOQUEST
PEUGEOT BOXER 2.0 5 BERTH
petrol with hob grill and oven, 3
way fridge, gas heating, hot and
cold water, fly screens and blinds,
rear kitchen, toilet shower room,
centre dinette with lounge, side
awning, only 64,000 miles with full
service history **£11,995**



2004/04 ROLLER TEAM 300 6 BERTH FIAT
DUCATO 2.0 DIESEL with parking sensors front
and rear Becker satellite navigation with cd/radio,
hob/grill, gas heating, 3 way fridge, side awning,
rear bike rack, rear toilet with separate shower,
two bunks at rear, centre kitchen with dinette
opposite, window fly screens and blinds, 240 v
electric, only 18,000 miles from new with full
service history **£20,995**



2004/54 COMPASS
AVANTGARDE PEUGEOT BOXER
2.0 DIESEL 4 berth, rear lounge
with centre kitchen with wash room
opposite, hob/grill/oven, fly
screens/blinds, heki roof light, side
awning, bike rack x2, full service
history with 26000 miles
£19,995



2002/52 AUTOTRAIL CHEFTAIN CITROEN 2.8
TURBO DIESEL full service history, 26,000 miles
from new, 4 berth, toilet/washroom with separate
show-room, kitchen in centre with lounge at the
front, roof air conditioning, gas blow air heating,
fly screen/blinds, full size cooker with hob / grill,
side awning, rear camera, roof ladder & roof rack,
detachable steering wheel, TV aerial, CD/radio, 2
owners, outstanding **£25,995**



2003/03 CI CARIOCO 10 FIAT
DUCATO 2.0 DIESEL 5 berth with big
rear shower/toilet room, centre kitchen
with full dinette with opposite and a
double dinette at rear, hob and grill, 3-
way fridge/freezer, gas heating, fly
screens and blinds, side awning, roof
rack and ladder, 28,000 miles with full
service history **£19,995**



2003/03 KNAUS SUN TRAVELLER 708 G FIAT
2.8 TURBO DIESEL 6 berth, cab air cond, 6 seal
belts, DOUBLE INSULATED (great for skiing
holidays), hob/grill/oven, fridge, blow air heating,
fly screens/blinds, toilet/shower room, radio/CD
system, flat screen tv, 115 Litre fresh water tank,
side awning with full safari room, two owners with
only 9,000 miles from new with full service history
£24,995



2006/06 CI CARIOCO 656 WITH 6 BERTH
FIAT DUCATO 2.0 DIESEL with 2 big bunks
at rear, centre kitchen with bathroom
opposite & a full dinette at front, gas
heating, Heki roof light, hob/grill/oven, big
rear door lockers/garage, roof rack &
ladder, bike rack x 4, hot/cold water, only
16,000 miles with full service history
£23,995



2001/Y AUTO SLEEPER
EXECUTIVE 2.5 TDI COACH
BUILD VOLKSWAGEN DIESEL 4
berth with hob/grill/oven, 3 way
fridge, gas heating, double glazing,
rear kitchen, side awning, only
42,000 miles from new, full service
history **£20,995**



2000/W HORSEBOX MAN 8/163 7.5 ton
DIESEL non HGV in green takes 3 horses
with refurbished livery, large bed over cab
sleeps two, seating for 6 with detachable
table, gas hob/grill, sink with pumped water,
jockey's door to horse area with rubber
matting through horse area, a very clean
reliable truck that is easy to drive.
£10,995

Tel: 01794 368468 Mobile: 07836 679844

SIMILAR VEHICLES PURCHASED FOR CASH

Timsbury Garage, Stockbridge Road, Romsey, Hants SO51 0NG (on the A3057) 3 miles out of Romsey
www.winterslowcarriagecompany.co.uk • sales@winterslow.co.uk



OWTONS TRADITIONAL BUTCHERS BBQ BUSTERS ARE BACK!

BBQ Pack One	BBQ Pack Two	BBQ Pack Three
1.36 Kg Pork Chops	1.36 Kg Pork Chops	2.2 Kg Pork Sausages
2 Kg Spicy Chicken	1 Kg Sirloin Steaks	1 Kg Sirloin Steaks
Wings	1.36 Kg Chicken	1.5 Kg Chinese Pork Ribs
1.36 Kg Chicken	Drumsticks/Thighs	2 Kg Chicken
Drumsticks/Thighs	1.5 Kg Chinese	Drumsticks/Thighs
1.5 Kg Chinese	Pork Ribs	1 Kg Minted Lamb Chops
Pork ribs	2.2 Kg Pork	2 Kg Spicy Chicken Wings
2.2 Kg Pork Sausages	Sausages	FREE 48 x 4oz
FREE 24 x 4oz	Free 24 X 4oz	Steak Burgers
Steak Burgers	Steak Burgers	Amazing value
Only £29.99	Only £38.99	at £56.99



shop@chalcroftfarm.co.uk

02380 601154

Burnetts Lane, West End, Southampton,
Hampshire, SO30 2HU

facebook



COUNTRYWIDE

FORKLIFTS, PLANT & MACHINERY LTD

SALES - SERVICE - REPAIRS

02380 221869

Unit Beta 3, Willments Ind Est, Hazel Road, Woolston, SO19 7HS

www.countrywideforklifts.co.uk

**New
Premises
Located in
Southampton**



Can you help me?

Blue Cross has many homeless and abandoned pets who are desperate for happy homes.

Please visit us if you can help.

The charity dedicated to helping sick, injured and homeless pets since 1897.



Blue Cross, Southampton rehoming centre,
Bubb Lane, West End, Southampton,
Hants SO30 2HL

0300 777 1530

www.bluecross.org.uk/southampton

Registered charity no: 224392 (England and Wales), SC040154 (Scotland)

A6756/0512

OVER 50s CAR INSURANCE

Paying more than
£195?*

Don't pay for careless drivers!

Being over 50, your experience means you should pay less for car insurance. If you're paying more than £195* per year, RIAS could insure you for less.

- **FREE** courtesy car whilst yours is being repaired
- **Up to 9 years** no claims discount

Call our UK-based advisors for a quote now!



*20.4% of new RIAS customers who took out a car insurance policy between 01.10.11 and 31.12.11 paid less than £195.

* One Parker pen per household. Subject to availability.

RIAS
Where insurance gets better with age

RING RIAS FREE

Quoting ref MA414

0800 183 1077

Lines are open 8.30am-8pm Mon-Fri & 8.30am-4pm Sat

www.rias.co.uk

RIAS Plc registered office: Deansleigh House, Deansleigh Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH7 7DU. Registered number: 1324965. Registered in England and Wales. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Insurance provided by RIAS Plc is not available in the Channel Islands.

Feel inspired with The Open University

TAKE an inspiring journey into learning. Whether you want to fulfil a long-held personal ambition or simply broaden your knowledge. The Open University has a range of inspiring study modules to help you explore the subjects that fascinate you.

Chris Hillyer
(Social Sciences graduate)

"It is not easy and requires both effort and commitment to keep going. My message would be to anyone - believe in yourself and The Open University will believe in you. Go for it!"



Tim McMahon (History graduate)

"Graduation day was one big family feeling, it gave me a sense of achievement and my life

"My study there was the most rewarding thing I have done in later life" would have been a lot poorer if I hadn't done it.

I cannot give enough praise to

The Open University - it is so much more than just an excellent learning institution. My study there was the most rewarding thing I have done in later life."

Alastair Coleman
(Social Sciences graduate)

"My degree at The Open University was hard work but addictive, and my course was reasonably priced and paid for by work sponsorship. In fact, it enabled me to apply for posts which were not open to non-graduates. As such, an OU degree has changed my life."



For more information or to get your free 2012 guide, visit www.openuniversity.co.uk/news or call **0845 450 5473**, quoting MANAEA



The Open University

Register today!

Solent **NHS**
NHS Trust

I want an appointment at a time that suits me



Pharmacy open 7 days a week

www.solent.nhs.uk/adelaidegp

0300 123 6066

*Excluding Bank Holidays



Adelaide GP Surgery
near Tesco, Millbrook

For patients living in Coxford, Millbrook, Redbridge, Shirley and Freemantle

We Inspire



Open Day

Charlton House Nursery & Prep School
Saturday 12th May 2012 10am - 2pm

Charlton House School
55 Midanbury Lane
Bitterne Park
Southampton
Hampshire SO18 4HE

023 8067 7575

www.stmaryscollege.co.uk

"Set within the 18 acres of St Mary's College, Charlton House Nursery is ideally located for children to investigate the world around them in a safe and protected environment." Mrs D Owen, Headteacher

Educating Girls & Boys age 3 - 16 in a caring Christian environment



Charlton House Nursery



St. Mary's College



Charlton House
St. Mary's College
Preparatory Dep

BOOK of the WEEK

Can't Swim, Can't Ride, Can't Run, By Andy Holgate

Sportsbookofthethemonth.com
price: £ 8.44, saving 35% on rrp

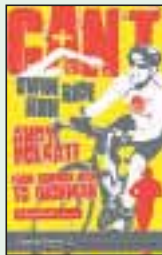
"My brain and mouth were obviously having communication problems because in reality what I said was, 'Ah go on then, I've got three weeks to train, I'll do it.' It was like an out of body experience watching my enthusiastic maverick self agree to something that my sensible self would have run a mile from."

It's difficult not to feel one's sense of amity with author Andy Holgate start to grow after he's delivered these brief sentences.

Though we're fully aware of what's coming, Holgate's confirmation that he will compete in the Cockerham Sprint Triathlon gets *Can't Swim, Can't Ride, Can't Run* off to a flier and prepares the reader for a thoroughly engaging journey.

Like so many of us, Andy Holgate was a lapsed runner who required the combination of a challenge and a change of circumstance to display a formidable willpower.

It was a mix that took him from overweight jogger who went running in the dark because "I looked like the Michelin man" to a guy who lost a stone in the space of a year and who, within 18 months, had completed five triathlons, a half marathon and 'The Big Woody', a 13-hour triathlon which finished with him running a marathon in 3 hours 41 minutes.



Can't Swim, Can't Ride, Can't Run is an inspirational story of a frustrated, unfit man careering towards sedentary middle age who accepts a simple challenge that changes his life.

Holgate is particularly good at describing the sense of satisfaction amateur athletes feel when they excel themselves and acknowledging the raw beauty of the often rugged countryside where he and his fellow triathletes compete.

Granted, he's unimpressed when he watches a cow urinate into the 'black expanse' of a gravel pit across which he will swim in the Cockerham's opening leg ("Don't forget to keep your mouth closed," his mate tells him), but the sense of fulfilment he feels after finishing *The Big Woody* is conveyed with the enthusiasm of a child on Christmas morning.

"The Woody was where four friends found out who they really were," he writes. "We would forever be bonded by what we put ourselves through that day."

If you're looking for an inspirational read to help you rediscover your inner athlete, then buy this outstanding book.

The Sports Pink has teamed up with Sports Book of the Month and have a signed copy of *Can't Swim, Can't Ride, Can't Run* to give away.

To wink, go to their website (www.sportsbookofthethemonth.com) and answer the following question:

Who is the current British male triathlon champion?

ALEX DREAMING OF VICTORY IN A BRUTAL RACE

IN the calm waters of Gosport, Alex Thomson's shimmering new yacht is a picture of serenity.

A handful of crew swarm carefully around the sleek machine, diligently checking that nothing is out of place.

It is clear that everything has to be absolutely perfect.

For Thomson, nothing less will do, because this is the boat that one of his biggest dreams is invested in, and it will not be in such peaceful surroundings for much longer.

The 38-year-old has a burning desire to overcome the ultimate challenge in ocean racing – the Vendée Globe.

Thomson has already tried twice to complete the single-handed round-the-world event, in 2004 and 2008, but was forced to retire on both occasions.

This time, though, he is hoping to not only reach the finish line, but become the first British skipper ever to win the race.

"That would be the result of 12 years of hard work, that's for sure," says Thomson, when asked what it would mean to claim the prestigious crown.

"That's the dream and that's what we're aiming for."

There is a sense of real determination in Thomson's words, as he bids to overcome the pain of his previous two attempts.

In his first Vendée, he was forced to retire early on due to structural damage.

Then, in 2008, his boat was struck by a French fishing vessel just three weeks before the start of the race.

A furious battle against the clock saw his team somehow complete the repairs in time, but he lasted just three days before suffering further damage that forced him to pull out.

This time he insists he has to finish.

"I remember the first one and all I was interested in was winning it," says Thomson ahead of the 2012 race, which starts in November. "Then the second Vendée, with what happened with the fishing boat, it was all

Gordon Simpson

gordon.simpson@dailyecho.co.uk

SPORTS REPORTER



about starting that race.

"This one, forgetting sponsors or anybody else, for me personally I have to finish this."

"This is a personal thing for me, so that's what it's about – finishing."

With his striking Farr-designed chrome-effect Hugo Boss yacht, which was purchased just last year, Thomson is confident he has a boat that can see him round the gruelling 24,000-mile route.

Moored up in Haslar Marina, the vessel is an impressive sight – it has already been steered by Thomson to a second-placed finish in the Transat Jacques

Vabre.

After an extensive winter refit, it seems more akin to a Formula 1 car sitting quietly in the garage, ready to be unleashed onto the track.

That is perhaps no surprise given that the Alex Thomson Racing team have been receiving support from Caterham Composites – a company that is part of the group which owns the Caterham F1 team.

Thomson is certainly more

confident now than he has ever been heading into the race.

"Definitely," he declares. "Every year we've become more and more organised as a team."

"My food for the Vendée is all ordered now. It's not here yet, but that's already done."

"I definitely fell more confident, and more confident in the team's ability."

"At the end, it's about capturing as much of the detail as possible."

With a race as brutal as the Vendée, Thomson knows nothing can be left up to chance.

And, with plenty of experience under his belt, he believes he knows how to properly set up his boat now more than ever.



VENDEE GLOBE DREAM: Hugo Boss, the boat Alex Thomson is hoping will help him win one of the most demanding yacht races in the world.

shot going into this race of, first of all, finishing and from there who knows what will happen?"

But, as Hosford notes: "It's a brutal sport. It's every four years and all the hopes and ambitions and all the hard work, slog and guts can instantly be dashed by one small failing."

Thomson will prepare for the race by making two transatlantic record attempts – the first from Cadiz to San Salvador in June and the second from New York to Plymouth in July.

"The idea of these two record attempts isn't really to break a record," explains Thomson. "It's about putting me under pressure and replicating a race situation, so I can actually learn something from it."

"I'm motivated all the time to push the boat hard, and I'm motivated to make mistakes, to learn."

Although the Vendée is an incredible test of endurance, Thomson insists he has no worries in that department.

"I don't really find the physicality of doing it that hard," he says.

"It's quite daunting a couple of days before the start and that's always a struggle for me, thinking you're going to spend 100 days alone at sea – or even just alone."

"The first couple of days are really painful on the sleeping, so you're physically tired, but after that it's almost refreshing, because all you've got to do is think about your race."

"My biggest concern is worrying about breaking."

Thomson believes his past experiences of the race could prove valuable.

"Having started two, I definitely know what to expect," he explains. "But the experience of the first time of doing it and not knowing what to expect was incredible."

"When we left the pontoon, I pretty much cried from there to the start line, and probably then cried for the next three days after that."

"So now it's a little less impactful on me, a bit less emotional, but it does help performance-wise to know what to expect."

probability it will be more than that."

Stewart Hosford, managing director of Alex Thomson Racing, believes the boat is as ready as it can be right now.

"With six months to go, from a team perspective, it almost feels like now we're kind of done," he says. "There's nothing else we can do."

"We're now in the hands of the gods and Alex's hands. The boat's in the best shape we can possibly make it."

"We've got a good

"Everybody tries to concentrate on making their boat as fast as possible," explains Thomson.

"What everybody, including myself, seems to forget is that in the last race 65 per cent of the boats that started didn't finish the race."

"So reliability really should be the number one priority in everybody's team."

"What we've really concentrated on in this refit isn't developing the boat, because the boat is pretty close to being fully optimised already, but reliability."

"We all have to assume the attrition rate will be 50 per cent this year. You'll be lucky if it's less than that, and there's a good



Sports Quiz

- 1 Patrick Friesacher, Robert Doornbos and Christijan Albers all drove for which team during the 2005 Formula One season?
- 2 New Arsenal assistant manager Steve Bould first joined the Gunners from which club in June 1988?
- 3 India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni plays for which side in the Indian Premier League?
- 4 Which jockey rode Don't Push It to Grand National victory in 2010?
- 5 In ice hockey, which team are the reigning NHL champions?
- 6 Britain's Nicola Sanders won a silver medal in which event at the 2007



World Athletics Championships in Osaka?

- 7 In which year did John Parrott win the world snooker title?
- 8 Which American course staged the 1991 Ryder Cup?
- 9 From which club did Sunderland sign defender Matt Kilgallon?
- 10 Former England cricket captain Alec Stewart played for which county side?
- 11 How many goals did golden boot winner Radamel Falcao score in this season's Europa League?
- 12 How old is American boxer Lamont Peterson?
- 13 Charl Willoughby plays for which county cricket side?
- 14 Which Kenyan runner holds the men's world record at 800 metres?
- 15 Which Blackpool player this week secured his third successive Championship play-off final appearance?
- 16 Stale Solbakken played for which English club?
- 17 Arsenal signed Laurent Koscielny from which Ligue 1 club?
- 18 Mitchell Johnson plays cricket for which country?
- 19 Which baseball team are called the Orioles?
- 20 Kamui Kobayashi drives for which Formula One team?
- 21 Owais Shah plays for which Indian Premier League side?
- 22 Which English stadium will host the 2013 Rugby League World Cup final?
- 23 In golf, who won last year's Players Championship?
- 24 How old is Harlequins and England flanker, and new Premiership player of the season, Chris Robshaw?
- 25 Who is the Bayern Munich coach?

ANSWERS

- 1 Minardi; 2 Stoke; 3 Chennai Super Kings; 4 Tony McCoy; 5 Boston Bruins; 6 400m; 7 1991; 8 Kiawah Island; 9 Sheffield United; 10 Surrey; 11 12; 12 28; 13 Essex; 14 David Rudisha; 15 Stephen Dobbie; 16 Wimbledon; 17 Lorient; 18 Australia; 19 Baltimore; 20 Sauber; 21 Rajasthan Royals; 22 Old Trafford; 23 KJ Choi; 24 25; 25 Jupp Heynckes.

OLYMPIC COUNTDOWN - SEE PAGES 32/33



LONDON 2012 OLYMPICS COUNTDOWN



Rhodes to London

SOUTHAMPTON sailor Ben Rhodes admits it's "business as usual" after being chosen for his second Olympics.

Along with partner Stevie Morrison, Rhodes finished ninth in the 49er class in the Beijing Games four years ago.

Now they are celebrating after this week being named in the team for the London Olympics.

"Selection at this stage is fantastic," he said.

"We have a huge level of competition in the British 49er fleet, but gaining selection now will allow us to take advantage of the all opportunities that we have of it being a home Games.

"We've always carried out our programme and the things we need to work on as though we had been selected.

"I think that's the only way you can really go about it.

"So for us, while selection is great, it's still business as usual – nothing changes."

Morrison added: "It does feel very different this time to four years ago.

"We were one of the first teams to be



DELIGHT: Ben Rhodes, left, and Stevie Morrison.

selected for Beijing and back then we felt like we kicked the doors down and left the selectors no scope to do anything other than select us.

"That led to a lot of expectation going into the Games and probably pressure on ourselves that we didn't realise at the time was there.

"This time around the things have been very different.

"The trials have been a lot closer but we always believed that we were the best team to deliver gold in Weymouth in 2012 and our track record in the venue over recent years supports that.

"We've learnt a lot about our sailing, about the Olympics and about ourselves since Beijing, which we feel will put us in much better place to do the business."

Nick anger

BRITISH windsurfer Nick Dempsey has hit out at sailing's governing body for "slowly ruining the sport" with their "bizarre" decision to drop the sport from the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

The International Sailing Federation (ISAF) announced this week that the discipline would be replaced by kiteboarding after this summer's Games.

The decision has been met by surprise and frustration within the windsurfing fraternity, which was epitomised by 2004 Olympic bronze medallist Dempsey.

"It is bizarre," he said. "I don't quite know how the ISAF have come up with the decision, but they have.

"It is based on a group of out-of-touch old guys that have no idea what they are talking about and are slowly ruining the sport.

"It is massively out of the blue. A big shock and really disappointing.

HAVE YOU GOT AN OLYMPICS-RELATED STORY FOR US? EMAIL echosport@dailyecho.co.uk OR PHONE 02380 424515



WHEN Gemma Spofforth takes to the blocks at the Aquatics Centre on July 29, it will mark the beginning of the final chapter of an extraordinary journey marked by the highs of victory and the lows of despair.

So extreme was her despair at times the south coast woman contemplated suicide, pulled back and forth by the voices in her head.

Swimming, in which she had excelled since a child, was something she considered quitting on occasions, especially following the World Championships in Shanghai last year where she went in as defending 100 metres backstroke champion but then failed to make it through the heats.

Shoreham-born Spofforth returned to Florida, where she had moved to study in late 2006, and continued her voluntary counselling work at a crisis centre, both on the telephone and in person for those also in despair.

At Christmas, the 24-year-old was still unsure of whether she would attempt to qualify for the Great Britain team, such was the "insane pressure".

Even in the lead-up to the Olympic trials, former Portsmouth Northsea star Spofforth emotionally detached herself in an attempt at self-protection, although a small flame had been lit by the sight of the five Olympic rings at St Pancras train station.

She said: "I definitely felt numb going into it.

"I took away all the emotions that I might need to help me swim fast. I took away all the emotions that might give me nerves before the race.

Epiphany

"So I was just numb because I didn't want to be in the position where if I didn't make it I would be in the depths of despair.

"I didn't want to be trying to pull myself out of a hole. I needed to know that I could numb myself."

Through a huge effort of will, Spofforth qualified for the 100m backstroke in London, where she will look to go one better than her fourth place four years ago in Beijing.

For Spofforth, the trials were akin to an epiphany.

"Coming off 2008 and everything that had happened to me it was almost like the end of an era, the final chapter.

"At the meet I was really nervous so it was really nice to finish that off.

"That's when it was real, before

I didn't want to be trying to pull myself out a hole... I took away all the emotions that I might need to help me swim fast



WINNER: Gemma Spofforth, middle, with the British 100m backstroke gold medal earlier this year. Also pictured are Lizzie Simmonds, left, and Georgia Davies.

the meet it never felt that real."

If Spofforth is to win a medal in the July 30 final, it would conclude a sometimes tortuous voyage that started in Sussex in November 1987 when she was born into a close-knit family comprising parents Lesley and Mark and younger brother Peter.

Excelling as a swimmer, Spofforth won bronze in the 2004 European Short-Course Championships less than a month after turning 17.

Pancreatitis struck and in late

2006 she moved to the University of Florida to kick-start her career.

But the following year Spofforth was forced to confront something with which she was to become horribly familiar.

Incredibly close bond

Her mother, with whom she had an incredibly close bond, was diagnosed with cancer and in December 2007 she passed away.

Spofforth contemplated suicide in the run-up to Beijing, where she

finished in that agonising fourth, but 2009 appeared to be kinder, a world title in world record time in Rome prefaced by her blowing a kiss skywards before the race.

She was such a success on the phones at the crisis centre she became an associate counsellor, rushing to those threatening suicide and intervening.

2010 may have been a mixed bag with European success followed by a Commonwealth Games, which she admittedly found difficult.

However, fate was to intervene

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH THE OLYMPICS IN THE ECHO AND PINK



LONDON 2012 OLYMPICS COUNTDOWN



HAVE YOU GOT AN OLYMPICS-RELATED STORY FOR US? EMAIL echosport@dailyecho.co.uk OR PHONE 02380 424515



COMFORTABLY NUMB ... HOW GEMMA HIT BACK FROM DEPTHS OF DESPAIR ...

again last year.

In a shattering blow, her father's girlfriend, June, died of lung cancer. Months later June's daughter Vicky had also succumbed.

Amid the grief and shock, she was unsure whether to continue with swimming despite it being a constant in her life.

Neither did she really share her feelings.

"I am actually quite a hypocrite when it comes to that because I don't allow people to listen to me about that.

"There are a couple of people who

work with me on the lines who are really good but as soon as I think they are trying to help I call them out on what they are doing."

Instead she would talk to fellow swimmers, including GB team-mate Lizzie Simmonds, but still at the end of the year she was uncertain about her future until she decided to give London a go.

Qualification fol-

lowed and two days later Spofforth found out she had been accepted for a post-graduate course in psychology and counselling.

Her eventual aim is working either in school or mental health counselling, the former something she has experience of.

She said: "It was a pretty amazing week. I got into grad school and made the Olympic team.

Everything just fell into place for me."

A gargantuan chocolate appetite, admittedly partly comfort eating, is off the menu until the Games after which she will publish her autobiography.

But for now, Spofforth has just one focus. "Right from the beginning of my career, London 2012, or even the 2012 Olympics before we won the bid, was my goal.

"The 2008 Olympics was just a bonus along the way. It felt like the goal of my entire career had been reached."

Helena out to make amends

HAMPSHIRE'S Helena Lucas wants to make up for her disappointing Paralympic debut with a medal at this summer's Games.

The British Olympic Association yesterday confirmed the Royal Yachting Association's nominations for the final three sailor selections at London 2012.

Southampton's Lucas was one of those chosen and will represent ParalympicsGB in the 2.4mR class, having been selected ahead of Megan Pascoe.

The 37-year-old was Britain's representative in the class four years when she finished seventh on her Games debut in Beijing – something she wants to improve on this time round.

"I'm really delighted to be part of the team, especially with it being a home Games it just adds that extra little bit of excitement to the whole thing," Lucas said.

"Home advantage will hopefully



OLYMPIC DELIGHT:

Paralympian sailor Helena Lucas.

give us a little bit of a push in the right direction, and I think the support that we're going to get with it being a home Games is going to be amazing.

"I was disappointed in Beijing with the result, but I think I learnt some very valuable lessons which I've brought into this campaign and which hopefully will make sure I get a medal this time.

"It would be absolutely amazing to be able to win a Paralympic medal, and to be able to do it in front of family and friends and a home crowd would be something really special.

"These Games, both in terms of Paralympic sailing and the Paralympics in general, will be one of the best Paralympic Games ever.

"That's just because the British support and interest in Paralympic sport has been fantastic, and the country seems to be really enthused and motivated by the athletes.

"We're going to have quite a special Games."

CONTACT THE ECHO SPORTS DESK ON 02380 424515

Youth football picture nostalgia special ...1995



Top right: Swifts Lee Broadbent (stripes) denies Warsash's Stuart Craig with a sliding tackle, April 1995. Pic order: 14368749

Top left: Hythe Strikers U10s (dark tops) v Hamble. October 1995. Pic order: 14368749.

Far left: ERI defender

Richard English heads clear for the Railwaymen in an U10 clash with Hedge End Rangers.

September 1995. Pic order: 14368845

Left: S&D's Mathew Thorne is just too late to stop Marc Calloway from scoring. April 1995.

Pic order: 14368736



Right: Richard Stanley (stripes) of Mansel and Paul Baistow (Sky Blues). October, 1995. Pic order: 14368761

Left: Sky Blue's Paul Bristow threatens Mansel U11's goal. October 1995.

Pic order: 14368766

Below left: Tyro League third round clash between Wyvern and Botley u11s. December 1995.

Pic order: 14368789

Below right: Phillip Standing (Solent U14) wards off a challenge by Chandler's Ford's Jason Everett. November 1995. Pic order: 14368996



Youth football picture nostalgia special ...1995



Left: Winsor U14's Christopher Hall (plain shirt) comes away with the ball as Hedge End's Lloyd Mitchell tracks back. September 1995.

Pic order: 14368799

Right: Tyro League U-11 pair Calum Earl (left) and Dean Dhanda pile the pressure on Mark Philo of North East Hants, December 1995. Pic order: 14368813



Top left: Chris Hall jumps to it for Worthies, under pressure from Andrew Higgins (left) and Paul Hodder, April 1995.

Pic order: 14368725

Top right: Right: Daniel Sabine (stripes) of Mansel gets to the ball ahead of Sky Blues' Peter Waterman. October, 1995. Pic order: 14368831

Bottom right: Daniel Rastrick holds off his marker to slot the Mansbridge winner ten minutes from time in the Tyro League. April 1995.



Pic order: 14368837

Below left: S&D's Stephen Lynch finds himself in the middle of a Hedge End sandwich consisting of Luke Perry (left) and Aaron Connolly. May, 1995.

Pic order: 14368854

Left: Simon Lawrence lets fly for City Link, January 1995. Pic order: 14368865

Right: Jack Brown clears for Mid Solent U10s under pressure from Tyro U10s' Asa Agboola. Pic order: 14368780



RACING week ahead

SOME may have doubted whether the day would ever come.

But finally the wraps are set to be taken off Frankel as he returns to action at Newbury.

The four-year-old carried all before him last season in a campaign that included his blistering triumph in the 2000 Guineas and a hard-fought verdict at Royal Ascot before putting top older horse Canford Cliffs in his place at Goodwood.

He signed off at Ascot with an imperious display in the QEII Stakes and many fans were just counting down the days until his return over the winter.

But like all giants of the turf, his story could never be quite so straightforward and the bump in the road came last month when he suffered a minor injury at home.

The rumour mill whirled into action and it became almost act in some quarters that Sir Henry Cecil would have to call time with the Galileo colt.

That idea has proved wide of the mark and, after strutting his stuff in a racecourse gallop at Newmarket, Frankel is primed to return in the JLT Lockinge Stakes at Newbury.

Certainly there will be those who are keen to take him on, including Excelebration, who had to give best to Frankel three times last term.

Now with Aidan O'Brien, it will be an interesting fourth round of their private battle but there will be plenty of long faces if Frankel is topped for the first time in his career.

The Aston Park Stakes and London Gold Cup provide support on the day but perhaps the previous day's card could prove a touch more enlightening in the longer term.

Next Friday's opening day is headlined by the Swettenham Stud Fillies' Trial Stakes, in which subsequent Epsom heroine Dancing Rain finished a narrow second last year.

York's Dante meeting would usually provoke most interest, but Frankel's presence ensures they are relegated to second this time around.

Nevertheless, the Knavesmire will be a hotbed of action on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and perhaps a clear rival to Camelot will emerge.

Wednesday's opening day is all about the fillies with the Tattersalls Musidora Stakes offering Oaks hints.

There is also the Duke of York Blue Square Stakes for the sprinters to contest with plenty of speedsters usually turning up for the six-furlong heat.

Thursday's totempool Dante Stakes is traditionally one of the hottest Derby trials but with Camelot such a strong Epsom favourite at this stage, it will surely take a special performance to usurp his position in the market.

Carlton House won the 10-furlong test last year before going on to finish third at Epsom.

FIXTURES (FLAT in capitals)

Monday: REDCAR, Towcester (evening), WINDSOR (evening), WOLVERHAMPTON

Tuesday: BEVERLEY, Hereford, KEMP-TON (evening), SOUTHWELL (evening), Wincanton

Wednesday: BATH (evening), Fontwell, LINGFIELD, Perth (evening), YORK (CH4)

Thursday: Folkestone (evening), Ludlow (evening), NEWMARKET (evening), Perth, SALISBURY, YORK (CH4)

Friday: Aintree (evening), HAMILTON (evening), NEWBURY (CH4), NEWCASTLE (evening), NEWMARKET, YORK (CH4)

Saturday: Bangor, DONCASTER (evening), NEWBURY (CH4), NEWMARKET (CH4), THIRSK, Uttoxeter (evening)

Sunday: Market Rasen, RIPON, Stratford

DREW SMITH SOUTHAMPTON LEAGUE – HILL OF A RECORD

THE roll of honour will this season be split into two sections to ensure all teams get the credit they deserve.

The season looked to be heading for an early finish as the weather was kind to us until the dreaded April downpours threatened to dampen spirits, *writes ROD SUTHERLAND.*

However, all is now heading for a thrilling climax, culminating in the Veterans A Division title which will hopefully be decided next Wednesday.

This week we will deal with the top five divisions, and next week the remainder - including the outcome of the Vets A Division which, at the time of writing, could still go any of three ways.

Premier Division champions were, once again, Bush Hill who won the title for a record breaking fourth season in a row.

They are looking to move on up to the Hampshire Premier League and we wish them well in their continued hunt for glory.

Bush Hill are also due to face AFC Stoneham at St Mary's next Tuesday May 15 (7.30pm).

At times during the season they were pushed by others, including old rivals Nursling, while there was also an impressive debut performance by Southampton University, who only tailed off towards the end as exam studies affected availability.

Latterly, Forest Town and Comrades proved to be their main rivals.

Bush Hill's season rested upon two crucial matches against London Airways in which they trailed both times.

In the away game they were 2-0 down before emerging 3-2 winners and they then triumphed 5-2 at home after trailing to seal the title.

Forest Town are likely to move to the Hampshire 2004 League along with Senior 1 outfit Lyndhurst.

BTC struggled throughout and only secured four points during a miserable campaign.

The Senior 1 title was very closely contested with Netley Central and Cadnam United facing off for the title in Netley's last game.

Netley went into that clash needing to avoid defeat to retain the silverware. A goalless draw was enough, but Cadnam finished a creditable second ahead of Thornhill HK and Lyndhurst.

White Horse, Netley Marsh and Hythe Aztecs also had good spells but inconsistency cost them. BTC Reserves improved late on to haul themselves above Michelmersh & Timsbury Reserves at the bottom.

In Junior 1, Wombles had a stunning opening to the season, not losing a single league match until well after Christmas.



JUST CHAMPION: Bush Hill with their silverware.



JUST CHAMPION: Netley CS with their silverware.



JUST CHAMPION: Wombles with their silverware.

Towards the end of March seven of the ten teams in this section still had a realistic chance of winning the title.

South City finished their fixtures and set out a fine total for the others to chase, but it came down to Wombles who defeated Braishfield 5-0 to seal the title.

Soton Energy finished second and also had an impressive Cup run before falling to Veracity in the Trophy final.

Park Sports, meanwhile, had an

impressive season to be proud of.

East Boldre, Veracity and AFC Grains fell away when the going got tough. At the bottom Otterbourne only managed one victory all season while Compton escaped, leaving Braishfield in the second bottom spot.

In Junior 2, a top of the table showdown saw Hedge End Rangers Res stun long-term leaders Q K Soton A 3-0, leaving themselves needing to win two further games to overhaul QK.

A 4-2 defeat of third placed Langley Manor and a 3-1 victory over strugglers Inmar secured the title for Rangers, who are likely to be moving to the Hampshire Premier Combination section.

Wellow finished bottom of the pile. Finally, in this first instalment, the Junior 3 title was won by Forest Town Reserves.

This was another tightly contested section involving some impressive teams.

Riverside and Wellington had con-

GOT A LOCAL FOOTBALL STORY? EMAIL echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

END OF SEASON REVIEW 2011/12 PART 1

FOR CHAMPIONS!

RACING

tips (Sunday)

DEED Of Gift should be given another chance in the wsteams.com Novices' Hurdle at Worcester.

The five-year-old gelding was sent off an even-money favourite on his race-course bow in February, but proved thoroughly disappointing as he trailed home a distant fourth.

Deed Of Gift is related to a couple of nice runners, though, and given that trainer Jonjo O'Neill's yard were hardly firing on all cylinders at that stage of the year, he could fare much better this time.

Kuilsriver was narrowly denied at Plumpton last time, but he can right the record with victory in the Betfair Racing Excellence Conditional Jockeys' Training Series Final Handicap Hurdle back at the Sussex track.

While yet to strike gold in 11 starts to date, Kuilsriver still has some decent form in the book for trainer Nick Gifford.

A crack at the Lanzarote and in Grade Three company looked a bit above him last term but two recent efforts back in novice company have yielded two runner-up prizes.

A mistake at the last cost the five-year-old dearly last time as it checked his momentum and he was worn down by Nagpur close home.

Gifford's decision to pitch him into a conditionals' race is interesting as Kuilsriver should be able to handle the likely testing ground.

Minella Mistake can prove to be the correct choice in the Plumpton Athletic Juniors Handicap Hurdle.

The Richard Rowe-trained mare showed her turn was near when only going down by a head to Manjam at Fontwell last week.

Soft ground and a gruelling test of stamina over this extended three miles and a furlong should hold no fears for the eight-year-old as she has also run creditably at this track in the past.

As long as she remains in the form she was on her recent outing, the daughter of Witness Box can finally get off the mark at the 15th attempt.

Connections of Duke Of Monmouth will surely be disappointed if he cannot find the target for the first time in the Banner Marquees 'National Hunt' Novices' Hurdle at Uttoxeter.

Charlie Mann's five-year-old has twice filled the runner-up spot from three starts over timber, most recently beating all bar the talented Seven Woods on his first attempt at three miles at Ffos Las.

The heavy ground he faces in Staffordshire will play to his strengths.

In receipt of weight from his only conceivable danger, Howard's Legacy, Duke Of Monmouth looks to have been found a gilt-edged opportunity.

SUNDAY'S TIPS

KILLARNEY: 1.55 Kestrel, 2.25 Dara Tango, 2.55 Special Tiara, 3.25 Realt Dubh, 3.55 Labelle, 4.25 Zaarito, 4.55 Island Peak, 5.25 Patanne

LEOPARDSTOWN: 2.15 Angela's Dream, 2.45 Famous Name, 3.15 Soon, 3.45 Wrote, 4.15 Sharalam, 4.45 King Ferdinand, 5.15 Tiger At Heart

PLUMPTON: 2.10 Winning Spark, 2.40 Minella Mistake, 3.10 Brunette'sonly, 3.40 Celtic Charlie, 4.10 Kuilsriver, 4.40 Evella, 5.10 Hollow Penny

UTTOXETER: 2.00 Shoegazer, 2.30 Duke Of Monmouth, 3.00 Stagecoach Jasper, 3.30 Orillittlebylitt, 4.00 Short Supply, 4.30 Tim The Chair, 5.00 Fast Ruby

WORCESTER: 2.20 DEED OF GIFT (NAP), 2.50 Reste Gosse, 3.20 Quousko De L'Isop, 3.50 Cadoudalas, 4.20 Traditional Bob, 4.50 Easter Day

DOUBLE: Deed Of Gift and Kuilsriver

The mighty Quinn ...



Sholing all White

SHOLING Youth Whites Under-11s are celebrating a great treble.

Managed by ex-Saint Dave Puckett and head coach James Taylor, the side first won their Southampton Tyro League Division 1 title with games in hand.

The next was the Tyro Challenge Cup played at AFC Totton against Colden Common Rovers, where they triumphed 2-1.

They completed the treble when they beat Colden Common Rovers again to lift the Hampshire FA



County Cup.

An extra-time winner from Ethan Taylor gave them a 3-2 victory, with Ryan Puckett and Taylor Whatley having earlier been on target.

LUCY Quinn signed off her time in Hampshire football with a hat-trick as the county FA's under-18 girls lifted the South & South West Counties Championship title this week.

Quinn, who departs for American soon to start a football scholarship, cracked a hat-trick as Hampshire thrashed Somerset 5-0 at Winklebury, writes **PETER RAYN-BIRD**.

It is the seventh time they have won the competition.

Hampshire were only leading 1-0 with eleven minutes left.

The hosts started the brighter side and took a tenth minute lead when Quinn went on a solo run through the middle, past three defenders, and her low shot from 18 yards hit the inside of the post and flew into the far corner.

Niamh Rawlins made it 2-0 in the 79th minute, and two minutes later Quinn's lob from 30 yards was helped into the net by the visiting keeper.

Within a minute it became four when Quinn broke through and fired past the keeper again to complete her triple.

Sub Emma Pinner made it 5-0 in the last minute.

Team: Jessica Myers (Chelsea Centre of Excellence), Laura Ingram (Portsmouth Ladies), Shannon Sievwright (Portsmouth Ladies), Lauren Clark (AFC Portsmouth), Lauren Heron (Portsmouth Ladies), Laura Rafferty (Hampshire FA Centre of Excellence), Lucy Quinn (Portsmouth Ladies), Jodie Brett (Chelsea Centre of Excellence), Daisy Sims (Portsmouth Ladies), Niamh Rawlins (Portsmouth Ladies).
Substitutes: Tamara Webb (Portsmouth Ladies) on for Sims 72nd minute, Emma Pinner (Portsmouth Ladies) on for Clark 68th minute, Ellie Bloomfield (Hampshire FA Centre of Excellence) (on for Rafferty 80th minute).

At the after match reception, held at the Basingstoke Town FCb, Ellie Bloomfield received a Hampshire shirt for her first appearance.

For their fifth appearance, plaques were presented to Pinner, Clark, Sims, Rafferty, Brett and Rawlins.

Shannon Stevwright received cap for her tenth appearance.

tested the Sdfa A Cup final (having met in the B Cup final the previous season). This time Riverside were victorious while Wellington still have a Hampshire FA A Cup final encounter on May 19 at Winklebury.

Their Cup runs probably cost them the titles, though, as firstly Compton Reserves opened up a seemingly unassailable gap of ten points and then Chandlers Ford Rangers built up a bit of a lead before Forest Town grabbed a cru-

cial win at Chandlers Ford to set up a clash with Riverside.

A draw would have given Rangers the title, while a win for Forest would have been enough.

Forest led, then trailed 2-1, before equalising with ten minutes left and grabbing an injury time winner amid scenes of euphoria.

Don't miss next week's round up of the remaining the Junior divisions and the three Veterans divisions.

CHAMPS: Forest Town Res.



KEEP UP TO DATE WITH LOCAL SPORT AT dailyecho.co.uk

I Slimming World because...



...I feel soooo gorgeous!
Lyndsay 😊

Join a warm and friendly group near you today...

Monday's -

Bassett,
St Michaels & All Angels Church,
Bassett Ave, 5.30 & 7.30 pm.
Claire 07786 014101

Blackfield,
Fawley Royal British Legion, Private Hall,
Exbury Road, 6pm & 7.45pm.
Debbie 07865 994874

Chandlers Ford,
Chandlers Ford Community Centre,
Hursley Rd, 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Liz 02380 788837

Eastleigh AM & PM,
The Cranbury Centre, Cranbury Road,
9.15 & 11.15am or 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Lorraine 07941 164776

Regents Park,
Regents Park Community College, King
Edwards Avenue, 5.30pm & 7.30pm.
Jo 02380 900899

**New Consultant & New Time
from 14th May,
Woolston,**
St Patricks Parish Centre, Porchester Road,
7.30pm. Vanessa 07746 533898

Tuesday's

Bishops Waltham,
United Free Church, Upper Basingwell
Street, 7.30pm.
Mel 01489 890250

Bitterne,
Catholic Church Hall, Commercial
Street, 3.30, 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Jo 07733 235039

Botley AM,
Botley Centre, High Street, Botley,
9.15 & 11.00am.
Claire 02380 407551

Boyatt Wood,
Crestwood College, Shakespeare Road,
5.15 & 7.15pm.
Jodie 07904 104262

Fair Oak,
Fair Oak Village Hall,
Shorts Road, 7pm.
Nicola 02380 696188

Freemantle,
Freemantle CE Community Academy,
Mansion Road, 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Claire 07786 014101

Hedge End,
St Johns Church, Underhill Centre,
St Johns Road, 5.15 & 7pm.
Claire 02380 407551

Lordwood,
Lordwood Community Centre,
Sandpiper Road, 6.30pm.
Angie 02380 777063

Redbridge,
All Saints Church Hall,
Sedbergh Road, 7pm.
Mags 07824 611832

Shirley AM,
Salvation Army Hall, Victor
Street, 9.30 & 11.30am.
Jo 02380 900899

Totton AM & PM,
Totton Christian Centre,
9 Ringwood Road,
9.30 & 11.30am or 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Liz 02380 788837

West End,
Hilldene Community Centre,
High Street, 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Jo 07825 350244

Woodley,
Woodley Village Hall, School Road,
5.30 & 7.30pm.
Charlotte 07810 643419

Wednesday's

Bitterne Park AM & PM,
United Reformed Church, Cobden Ave,
Bitterne Park, 9.15am & 6pm.
Siobhan 07956 219585

**New Venue & New Times of Fleming Park
From 30th May
Chandlers Ford,**
Velmore Community Centre, Falkland Road,
5.15pm & 7.15pm.
Sarah 07734 713135

Hythe,
St John's Hall, New Road, Hythe,
5.30 & 7.30pm.
Karen 02380 862990

**Up to & including the 23rd May,
Fleming Park,** Pavilion on the Park,
Kingfisher Road, 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Sarah 07734 713135

Hamble,
Hamble Sport's Complex, Main Hall,
Satchell Lane, 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Hayley 07772 351717

Hounslow,
Hounslow School, Jacobs Gutter
Lane, 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Emilie 07817 968028

Lordshill,
Lordshill Church, Lordshill District
Centre, 5.15 & 7.00pm.
Lynn 07971 354179

**New Consultant from 16th May,
Peartree Green AM,**
Peartree Church Hall, Peartree Road, 9.30am.
Hayley 07545 772258

Sholing,
St Monica Junior School, St Monica
Road, 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Heather 01489 784508

Thornhill Park,
Thornhill Baptist Church, Thornhill Park
Road, 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Anji 02380 472737

Upper Shirley,
Isaac Watts Church, Winchester Road/
Luccombe Road, 7.30pm.
Sue 07841 338893

Thursday's

Bitterne AM,
Catholic Church Hall, Commercial
Street, 9.15 & 11.15am.
Jo 07733 235039

Calmore,
Calmore Community Centre, Calmore
Drive, Totton, 3.30, 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Emilie 07817 968028

**New Venue & New Times of Fleming
Park From 31st May
Chandlers Ford AM,**
Velmore Community Centre,
Falkland Road, 9.15am.
Sarah 07734 713135

Chartwell Green,
Moorlands Community Centre, Townhill
Way, 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Kay 07833 746532

**Up to & including the 24th May,
Fleming Park AM,** Pavillion on the
Park, Kingfisher Road, 9.15am.
Sarah 07734 713135

Hedge End,
Turnpike Sports Pavillion, Turnpike Way,
1.15, 3.30, 5.15 & 7pm.
Claire 02380 407551

Highfield,
Highfield House Hotel, Highfield Lane,
6pm & 7.45pm.
Jo 07733 235039

Hythe AM,
St John's Hall, New Road, Hythe,
9.15am.
Karen 02380 862990

North Baddesley,
The Village Hall, Botley Road,
5.30 & 7.30pm.
Charlotte 07810 643419

Upper Shirley,
Atherley Bowling Club,
Hill Lane, 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Paul 07891 085069

Weston,
Chamberlayne Leisure Centre, Weston
Lane, 3.30, 5.30 & 7.30pm.
Hayley 07545 772258

Winchester,
Winchester RFC, North Walls Park, Off
Hilliers Way, 7.15pm.
Joyce 01962 883331

Friday's

Hythe AM (BUTTS ASH),
St Annes Community Centre, Warrys
Close, 9.30 am.
Kim 02380 843883

Saturday's

Totton AM,
The Empire Hall,
Salisbury Road, 10am.
Toni 02380 284107

**SAVE
£5***

*Half price membership
until 26th May 2012

**FREE
online
support**

Slimming
WORLD

because you're amazing

0844 897 8000
www.slimmingworld.com



**EYPE HOUSE
CARAVAN PARK**
Small quiet caravan park.
Statics for hire, 200yds
to beach.
On Dorset Coastal path.
Tel: 01308 424903
www.eypehouse.co.uk

Accident Injury?

- No Win No Fee
- Keep 100% of your compensation
- ISO 9001 Quality Assured Service

**Fantastic
win ratio**

Rapid
SOLICITORS
Call: **08451898324**

- Free home visits • Lines open 24/7
- Consulting offices throughout the region

We are Rapid Response Solicitors -
Regulated by The Solicitors Regulation Authority (Reg. No. 02512434).

LATE AVAILABILITY COACH HOLIDAYS

03 Jun : Picturebook German Medley 6 day	£469
04 Jun : Ludlow & The Shropshire Hills 5 day	£358
04 Jun : English Lakes 5 day	£339
04 Jun : Warners Thoresby Hall 5 day	£425
08 Jun : Spain - Santa Susana 10 day	£569
10 Jun : Jersey by Sea 8 day	£498
10 Jun : London Eye & Thames Cruise 2 day	£129
11 Jun : Lake District & Mountain Goat 5 day	£429
13 Jun : Green Spain - Cantabria 7 day	£447
15 Jun : Austria - 3 Countries 10 day	£699
15 Jun : Costa Brava - Roses - 10 day	£619
16 Jun : Morecambe & The Lakes 8 day	£499
16 Jun : Summer in the Isle of Wight 8 day	£514
18 Jun : Galway & The Corrib Princess 6 day	£539
18 Jun : Warners Norton Grange 5 day	£321
22 Jun : Torquay at Leisure 8 day	£365
23 Jun : Great Yarmouth & The Broads 8 day	£459
24 Jun : Lucerne & The Bernese Oberland 8 day	£743
25 Jun : Essex Coast & Country 5 day	£309
25 Jun : Eastbourne & The Bluebell Railway 5 day	£339
25 Jun : North Devon - Bideford 5 day	£239
26 Jun : Isle of Man 8 day	£639
01 Jul : South Wales - Tenby 7 day	£479
01 Jul : Coast & Villages of Suffolk 5 day	£342
01 Jul : Bedfordshire & Bletchley Park 5 day	£349
02 Jul : Harrogate & York 5 day	£349
05 Jul : Heart of England 5 day	£329
05 Jul : The Rhine in Flames 8 day	£569
06 Jul : Paris City Break 4 day	£239
06 Jul : Althorp House 3 day	£149
08 Jul : Italy - Lake Maggiore 8 day	£697
09 Jul : Waterways of Scotland 5 day	£439
09 Jul : Torquay 8 day	£426
13 Jul : North Devon Summer Break 4 day	£159
13 & 20 July : Holland - Floriade 4 day	£259
14 Jul : Jersey by Air 8 day	£536
14 Jul : Welsh Coast - Barmouth 8 day	£483
14 Jul : Austria - Rail Mania 8 day	£674

Contact us now for full details

**ANGELA
Holidays**
A Angela Holidays Ltd

Tel (023) 8040 8221
E-mail : bookings@angelaholidays.co.uk
www.angelaholidays.co.uk

Oaktree House
Lowford
Bursledon
Southampton
SO31 8ES

Make your Will Fortnight

14th to 25th May 2012

Write or update your will
and you can donate to
Naomi House children's
hospice instead of
paying the solicitor.



To book an appointment please ring between 14-25th May:

**Bernard Chill & Axtell,
Eastleigh**

Paul Harvey
Tel: **023 8061 3197**

**cgm Solicitors,
Hythe**

Daniel Curnock
Tel: **023 8084 2765**

**Bells,
Romsey**

Martin Russell/Eleanor Bradley
Tel: **01794 513328**

**Lampert Bassitt,
Southampton**

Jeremy Tucker/Mihiri Gajraj
Tel: **023 8083 7777**

**cgm Solicitors,
Totton**

Daniel Curnock
Tel: **023 8066 6452**

**Churchers,
Cosham, Fareham, Gosport,
Lee-on-the-Solent, Portsmouth**

Mary Hazlewood
Tel: **01329 822333**

For further information please contact:

Paula Flower on **01962 843513** www.naomihouse.co.uk

Charity Registration number 1002832.



OVER 50s HOME INSURANCE

Paying more than

£143?*

FREE
Parker pen†
(Worth £7.45)
when you get
a quote

**Ring RIAS today to see
if there's good news!**

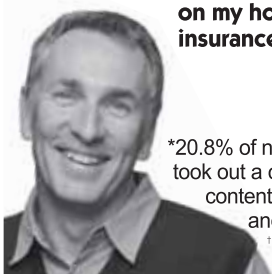
Over 50? Call RIAS to check your buildings
and contents insurance premiums now!

If you're paying more than £143* per year, RIAS
could insure you for less – that's because we
specialise in insuring people over 50.

Call our UK-based advisors for a quote now!

- £1,000,000 buildings cover and £50,000 contents cover as standard.
- RIAS Home Insurance has been awarded a 5 Star Rating by Defaqto for its comprehensive level of cover.

**'Being over 50
isn't a big deal.
Saving money
on my home
insurance is'**



*20.8% of new RIAS customers who
took out a combined buildings and
contents policy between 01.10.11
and 31.12.11 paid less than £143.

†One Parker pen per household.
Subject to availability.



RING RIAS FREE Quoting ref **TA1036**
0800 183 0931

Lines are open 8.30am-8pm Mon-Fri
& 8.30am-4pm Sat www.rias.co.uk

RIAS
Where insurance
gets better with age

RIAS Plc registered office: Deansleigh House, Deansleigh Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH7 7DU. Registered number: 1324965. Registered in England and Wales. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Insurance provided by RIAS Plc is not available in the Channel Islands.

COMPARISON OF PRESCHOOL PARENTING INTERVENTION (COPPI) TRIAL



**Are you the parent/main caregiver of a child aged
2 years 9 months to 4 years 6 months?**

Does your child constantly move around, fidget and wriggle, not listen to you or talk too much at meals, during travel, when shopping, watching TV, playing or while visiting friends and relatives?

If this sounds familiar, you could apply to take part in our exciting and innovative research project and get the opportunity, if you are eligible, to take part in a programme designed to help parents and overactive children. This will take just 1 to 2 hours of your time each week for a period of 12 weeks.

We are inviting parents/main caregivers aged 18 years or older of children aged 2 years 9 months to 4 years 6 months with significant levels of overactive/hyperactive or inattentive behaviour to participate in this research so that we can find out how effective two different parenting programmes are in helping such families.

For further information about the study and to take part in a short interview to see if your family is eligible for inclusion in the study, please contact the COPPI Trial team at the University of Southampton by phone on **02380 596 652/592 358** or by mobile on **078252 56663** or by email klc3g08@soton.ac.uk or visit our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/pages/University-of-Southampton-P-E-D-I-A-Study/202198939805102>.

Brand New Gym Refurbishment

Special Membership offer available



Come and see the refreshing new look to the gym, which will include:

- Brand New Cardio Equipment, which include:
 - o Upright Bikes
 - o Treadmills
 - o Cross trainers
 - o Recumbent Bikes
- New Functional Area, including
 - o The latest VIPR TM equipment
 - o New TRX equipment
 - o Power Bags

**New
Gym Kit
Upgrade**

**The new look will be launched on the
19th May 2012**

**Contact reception today
02380 684800**

Fleming Park Leisure Centre
Passfield Avenue, Eastleigh

DC LEISURE
Fitness & Leisure Facilities
Operated by DC Leisure Ltd on behalf of Eastleigh Borough Council and Winchester City Council

**kinetika
fitness**
Operated by DC Leisure Ltd on behalf of Eastleigh Borough Council and Winchester City Council

**EASTLEIGH
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

DC151927



LONDON 2012 OLYMPICS COUNTDOWN



IAIN HEADS FOR PRO RANKS WITH PARTING SHOT AT AMATEUR GAME

SOUTH COAST boxer Iain Weaver slammed GB boxing after being overlooked for the London 2012 lightweight spot and insisted he was turning his back on the amateur game.

The Commonwealth featherweight gold medallist had been battling it out with Martin Ward for the English 60kg spot at the European Olympic qualifying event in Trabzon – a silver medal in the Strandja Cup in February seemingly sealing his place, writes **SAMUEL WAKEFIELD**.

But British Boxing surprised many when they selected relatively untried Sam Maxwell for the England vest – only for Scotland's Josh Taylor to claim the Olympic spot after reaching the semi-finals.

And with Weaver now in talks with promoters after deciding to go pro, the 22-year-old claimed he had lost faith in the administra-

tors of British boxing.

"I was hacked off with it because in my opinion it was a completely unfair decision to go with the other lad," said the Ferndown-based boxer who trains at Golden Ring in Southampton.

"If the kid is better than me then I wouldn't have minded, but I have won something like nine medals in ten tournaments and Martin had done similar.

"We have won medals all over the world and then they pick this kid out of the blue, I really don't know what they were thinking.

"They said I was a little bit small for the weight but small or not I won medals at that weight and it was a bad decision. "It is always going to be raw because I think I was unfairly not given a fair crack at it.

"I've had enough of the squad if I am honest. Once I have been treated like that I won't be able to ever trust them again so I am focused on winning titles in the pros.

"I'm having a bit of a rest and

enjoying my time, it is a much needed rest. I'll have three weeks off and then I'll be back in the gym as soon as I get a promoter."

While his Olympic dream is over Weaver will play a role after he was selected as one of just 8,000 people to carry the London 2012 Torch courtesy of Lloyds TSB.

And the former Ferndown Upper School pupil admitted it would be nice to be involved and backed his friend Andrew Selby to win gold at this summer's games.

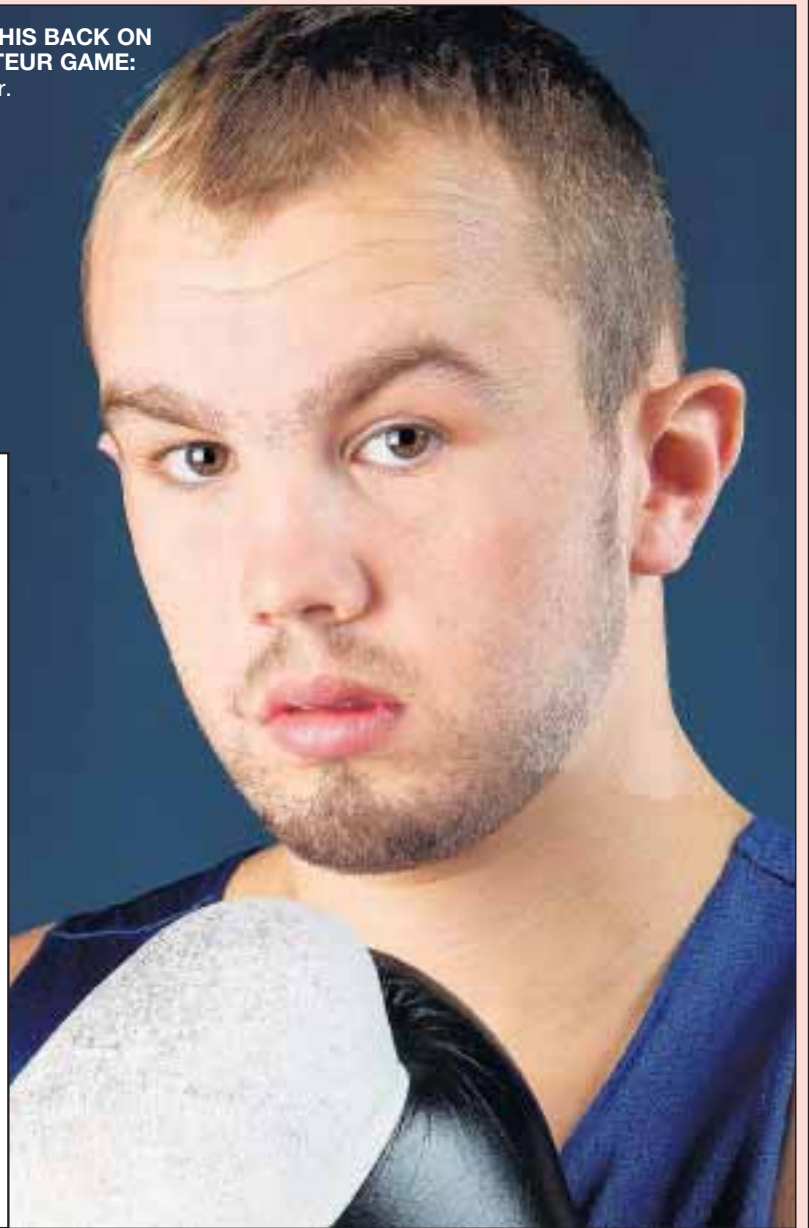
"I'm looking forward to running with the torch; it should be a good occasion," he added.

"I'm used to being in front of a crowd with all the eyes on me and I'm usually getting my head punched in so running with the torch will be easy.

"I'm best mates with Andrew so I'll be watching him and out of all the boys who are going he is going to get a gold medal. He is a hot favourite in my opinion."

As the only National Presenting Partner of the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay, Lloyds TSB is bringing the excitement of the Games and Olympic Flame closer to you. Find out what we're doing in your community and who is carrying the Flame at lloydstsb.com/carrytheflame

TURNING HIS BACK ON THE AMATEUR GAME:
Iain Weaver.



WORCESTER

Going: Good to Soft-Soft in places

2.20 WSTEAMS.COM NOVICES' HURDLE (CLASS 4). £5,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m Penalty Value £3,249.

1	P15-1	DE FAOTHESDREAM (IRE) (12) E Williams 6 11 5	P Moloney
2	0/200-	BARRISON (35) C Longsdon 5 10 12	T J O'Brien
3	0/200-	CORNISH BEAU (IRE) (21) D R Newland 5 10 12	C Ward (7)
4	0/200-	DEED OF GIFT (IRE) (74) (BF) Jonjo O'Neill 5 10 12	M Llanhan (7)
5	000-6	FITANDPROPERJOB (5) B Powell 6 10 12	S O'Donovan (7)
6	2025-	KEEP KICKING (IRE) (45) (BF) Jonjo O'Neill 5 10 12	A P McCoy
7	0500-	OI OI SAVALOI (211) C Longsdon 5 10 12	F de Giles
8	00-	OSCAR RAINBOW (35) David Lewis 6 10 12	J Banks (7)
9	3236-3	PEAKS OF FIRE (IRE) (31) T Vaughan 5 10 12	Michael Byrne (5)
10	6-0	SUTTON WHO (FR) (87) J Snowden 6 10 12	H Skelton
11	050-	TOUGHNESS DANON (14) B Powell 6 10 12	A Tinkler

BETTING: 7-4 De Faolthesdream, 11-4 Keep Kicking, 3-1 Peaks Of Fire, 7-1 Deed Of Gift, 12-1 Barrison, 25-1 Fitandproperjob, 33-1 Oi Oi Savalo, Cornish Beau, 50-1 others.

2.50 JB BIRTHDAY 'NATIONAL HUNT' MAIDEN HURDLE (CLASS 4). £5,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m 4f Penalty Value £3,249.

1	11263-	BALLYBOKER BOY (IRE) (26) J Snowden 8 11 0	A P McCoy
2	73602-	CRYSTAL SWING (65) R Phillips 5 11 0	D Costello
3	0P45F-	DR ANUBIS (IRE) (59) David Lewis 7 11 0	Miss Alice Mills (7)
4	75354-	LUCKY VIC (IRE) (77) F Brennan 6 11 0	C Studd (3)
5	05P4-	R CRAIG (IRE) (55) M Keighley 7 11 0	A P Cawley
6	14452-	RESTE GOSSE (FR) (38) P Hobbs 7 11 0	T J O'Brien
7	100-3	SARRACO (IRE) (14) R Lee 6 11 0	S Thomas
8	3006-	SHADES OF AUTUMN (IRE) (31) Miss L Blackford 7 11 0	A Glasborough
9	006P-	TIBER RIVER (434) Mrs N Evans 8 11 0	J Mogford
10	213-	TORNADO IN MILAN (IRE) (61) E Williams 6 11 0	P Moloney
11	213-	VRAI VERT (IRE) (29) (BF) P Nicholls 5 11 0	D Jacob
12	06P/UO	JOE MANGO (8) E G Bevan 10 10 7	Peter Carberry (5)

BETTING: 3-1 Vrai Vert, 7-2 Reste Gosse, 4-1 Ballyboker Boy, 5-1 Tornado In Milan, 7-1 Crystal Swing, 8-1 Sarraco, 14-1 Lucky Vic, 20-1 R Craig, 66-1 others.

3.20 FREEBETS.CO.UK HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS 4). £5,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m 4f Penalty Value £3,249.

1	3F514-	MIDNIGHT TUESDAY (FR) (26) D Pipe 7 11 12	T Bellamy (7)
2	314PP-	BRUNSTON (18) B Powell 6 11 10	A Tinkler
3	11054-	OCA DE THAIX (FR) (20) W Goldsworthy 10 11 8	Miss Charlotte Evans (7)
4	3F303-	QUOUSKO DE L'ISOP (FR) (21) Mrs R Hobbs 8 11 8	S Thomas
5	52325-	BRIEFCASE (IRE) (53) F Edwards 7 11 2	D Jacob
6	16P80-	I CAN RUN CAN YOU (IRE) (116) (D) Jonjo O'Neill 6 11 2	A P McCoy
7	74U30-	MATAKO (FR) (156) (D) Mrs C Kevel 9 11 1	James Best (5)
8	5/4F6-	HENRY HURST (IRE) (26) J Fox 6 10 11	H Frost
9	46/04-	PONTYATES (45) P Bowen 7 10 10	D Devereux (3)
10	531P4-	LIGHT THE WORLD (FR) (23) R Phillips 4 10 9	D Costello
11	420/0-	JOSEPHINE MALINES (F44) R J Price 8 10 1	Nathan Cook (7)
12	6/500-	PRIEST FIDEL (IRE) (178) (C) C Nenadich 8 10 0	R McLernon

BETTING: 11-4 Midnight Tuesday, 5-1 Light The World, 6-1 Pontyates, 7-1 Quousko De L'isop, 15-2 I Can Run Can You, 10-1 Henry Hurst, 12-1 Mataka, Briefcase, 14-1 others.

3.50 2ND SKIN STORAGE KING BRACHAIN HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS 4). £3,250 added 4YO PLUS 2m 7f Penalty Value £2,112.

1	0P00-2	CADOUALAS (FR) (14) R Lee 9 11 12	P Moloney
2	52053-	HANDSOME HARRY (IRE) (52) K Bailey 6 11 12	Charles Greene (7)
3	465/3-	DINGAT (IRE) (45) (C) T Vaughan 7 11 11	D Costello
4	66014-	OSCARSLAD (IRE) (22) P Nicholls 6 11 11	D Jacob
5	64055-	BABYSITTER (IRE) (63) (BF) Jonjo O'Neill 9 11 10	A P McCoy
6	15100-	ANOTHER KATE (IRE) (221) (D) D M Richards 8 11 10	R McLernon
7	FP0U0-	DIXIE BULL (IRE) (171) C Egerton 7 11 8	M Grant
8	PP6-0	AVIADOR (GER) (8) Mrs L Wadham 6 11 8	T J O'Brien
9	63/63-	RICARDO'S CHANCE (39) (C) N Twiston-Davies 13 11 8	D England
10	2/421-	TERFERE'S TOSCAR (FR) (31) D Pipe 7 11 5	T Scudamore
11	7/05P-	WINDS AND WAVES (IRE) (37) H Daly 6 11 3	A Tinkler
12	54/33-	MUDITA MOMENT (IRE) (34) Mrs A Brooks 7 11 0	J Doyle
13	43P-P	SAWPII SAMBA (IRE) (12) Miss V Williams 7 10 12	S Thomas

BETTING: 3-1 Terfer's Toscar, 9-2 Cadoualass, 6-1 Oscarlad, 7-1 Babysitter, 10-1 Dingat, Handsome Harry, 12-1 Ricardo's Chance, Mudita Moment, 16-1 others.

4.20 CHELTENHAM & THREE COUNTIES RACE CLUB HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS 3). £5,500 added 4YO PLUS 2m Penalty Value £3,574.

1	0/FUJ-	KUSADASI (IRE) (228) D Pipe 7 11 12	T Scudamore
2	2100P-	HIGHWAY CODE (USA) (34) (D) R Lee 6 11 10	J Greenall (5)
3	35500-	TARKARI (IRE) (164) (D) E Williams 7 11 5	P Moloney
4	66651-	TRADITIONAL BOB (IRE) (62) (D) G McPherson 7 11 4	T Molloy (3)
5	7/0331-	SPECIALAGENT ALFIE (79) (D) N Gifford 6 10 13	L Treadwell
6	11626-	SWEET WORLD (25) (D) B J Llewellyn 8 10 10	Mr R J Williams (7)
7	4/030-	DELLA SUN (FR) (23) A Whitehead 6 10 8	J Banks (7)
8	13F00-	TONY DINOZZO (FR) (21) S Durack 5 10 8	R Killoran
9	40350-	WITLY MILLS (50) K Bishop 7 10 0	James Best (5)

BETTING: 5-4 Specialagent Alfie, 3-1 Traditional Bob, 6-1 Kusadasi, 10-1 Sweet World, 12-1 Tarkari, 14-1 Highway Code, 20-1 Tony Dinnozo, 25-1 Della Sun, 33-1 Witly Mills.

4.50 WORCESTERNEWS.CO.UK FOR BREAKING NEWS & SPORT INTERMEDIATE NH FLAT RACE (CONDITIONALS/AMATEURS) (CLASS 6). £2,100 added 4 to 6YO 2m Penalty Value £1,437.

1		HARRY DORE R J Price 6 11 3	D Devereux (3)
2		KINGS MUSIC (IRE) P Hobbs 6 11 3	Mr T Cheesman (7)
3	6-	PUT A SOCK IN IT (15) C Kellett 5 11 3	Mr J Coulson (7)
4	40-	SCHINDLER'S SECRET (IRE) (52) Mrs R Hobbs 5 11 3	Peter Carberry (5)
5	UO-	SEVEN IRON SID (29) M Scudamore 6 11 3	J Kingston (3)
6	4/13-	SPANISH ARCH (IRE) (22) C Longsdon 5 11 3	Kieran Woods (5)
7		TO BE FRANK Mrs C Kevel 6 11 3	James Best (5)
8	3-	EASTER DAY (FR) (52) P Nicholls 4 10 13	R Mahon (3)
9		I'M FRAAM GOVAN G Baker 4 10 13	Conor O'Farrell
10	6-	TEMPERED STEEL (IRE) (29) G McPherson 5 10 10	T Molloy (3)
11		DE BARRA ROE (IRE) K Bailey 4 10 6	E Cookson (7)
12		JOE'S DAUGHTER D Burchell 4 10 6	W Twiston-Davies (7)

BETTING: 7-4 Easter Day, 5-2 Spanish Arch, 6-1 Kings Music, 10-1 Tempered Steel, 12-1 Barra Roe, 12-1 I'm Fraam Govan, 14-1 To Be Frank, 20-1 Harry Dore, 25-1 others.

Turn back to pages 36 and 37 for horse racing news and tips.

ISSN 0969-563X
19>
9 770969 563069
P 55p
ISSN 0969-563X
Published by Newsquest Media (Southern) Ltd, and printed at Newsquest (Southern) Ltd, from its offices at Newspaper House, Test Lane, Redbridge, Southampton, SO16 9JX. Telephone: 023 8042 4800. Registered at the Post Office as a newspaper. 123rd year. No. 37483